



Shojo Beat Manga

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Story & Art by

Aya Nakahara

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contents

11

Chapter 41.....5

Chapter 4247

Chapter 43..... 90

Chapter 44..... 133

Glossary175

The Story So Far. . .

Risa and Ôtani are their class's lapsed comedy duo...except that Risa falls in love with Ôtani! She finally works up the courage to tell him how she feels, only to be rejected. Even so, she keeps trying to change his mind, and finally they start going out...but will they stay together?! It's looking dicey...because Ôtani wants to go to college and Risa doesn't. So he's studying his butt off for the entrance exams, while Risa has taken a waitressing job. Not only do they hardly ever see each other anymore, but Kohori, a cute guy at work, has a huge crush on Risa...and after Ôtani catches him kissing her while she's asleep, he runs into Risa and Kohori out together. That's it! Ôtani breaks up with Risa!! But not for long...

♥ To really get all the details, check out *Lovely Complex Vol. 1-10*, available at bookstores everywhere!!

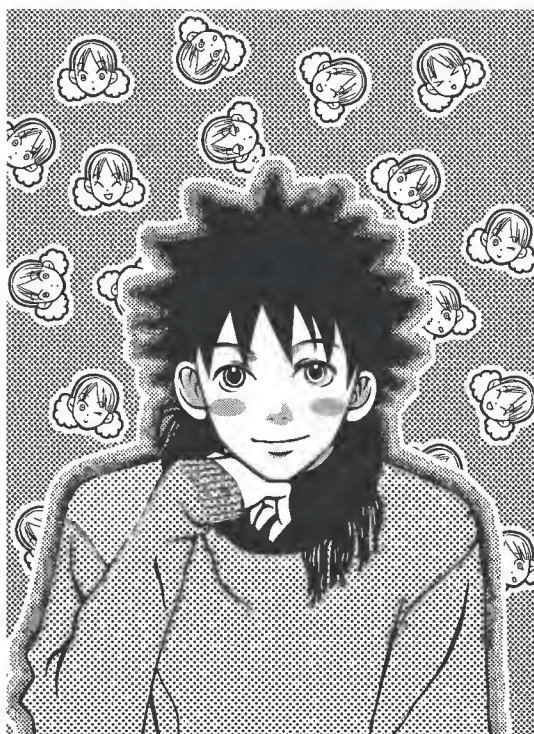
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**A HAPPY
NEW YEAR**

Story & Art by
Aya Nakahara





CHAPTER 41





HE CAN
TAKE
ONE
NIGHT
OFF.

OH, BUT...
CAN ÔTANI
EVEN GO?
HE MIGHT BE
STUDYING.

LET US
SEE YOU
GUYS
HOLDING
HANDS,
AT LEAST.



AND THEN
WE CAN ALL
DO THE NEW
YEAR'S EVE
COUNTDOWN
TOGETHER.

OOH,
THAT
SOUNDS
LIKE A
LOT OF
FUN!



WINTER
BREAK
STARTED,
THEN
CHRISTMAS
CAME AND
WENT...

IS IT
OKAY?!

WANNA
COME
TOO,
SEIKO-
CHAN?

Yaaaay♡

We'd
love to
have
you
come.

OKAY,
SO I'LL
CALL
CHIHARU
ABOUT
IT TOO.



...

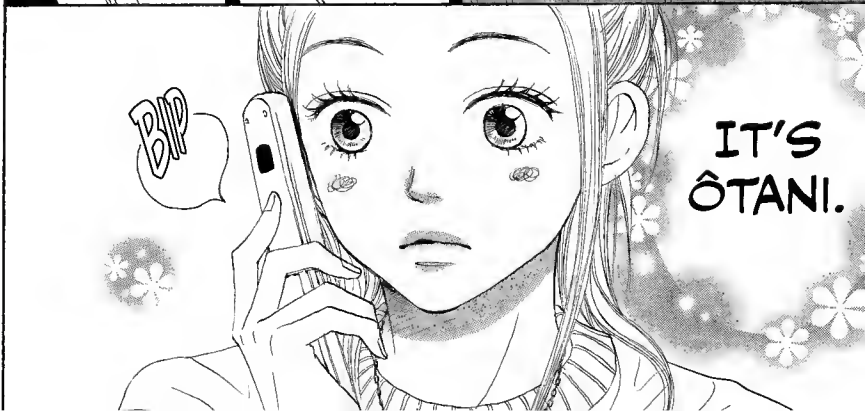
I GUESS
IT WON'T
HURT TO
ASK HIM
ANYWAY.

...AND
NEXT
THING
I KNOW,
IT'S NEW
YEAR'S
EVE.



...ARE
LESS
THAN A
MONTH
AWAY.

ÔTANI'S
COLLEGE
ENTRANCE
EXAMS...



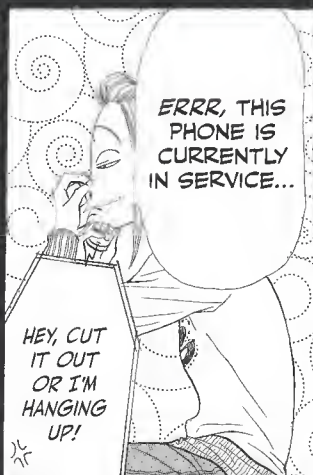


NO
WAY!

SO HEY,
CAN YOU
COME
OUTSIDE
FOR A
MINUTE?

THIS IS
AMAZING!
I HAD THE
PHONE IN
MY HAND!
I WAS JUST
THINKING
ABOUT
CALLING
YOU!

HEE
HEE.



ERRR, THIS
PHONE IS
CURRENTLY
IN SERVICE...

HEY, CUT
IT OUT
OR I'M
HANGING
UP!



KA-
CHAK

THUD

WHAT?!

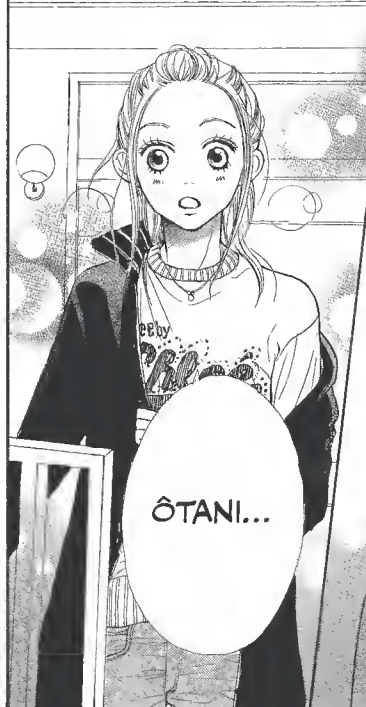
THUD

THUD



...OUT-
SIDE?

YOUR
HOUSE.



ÔTANI...



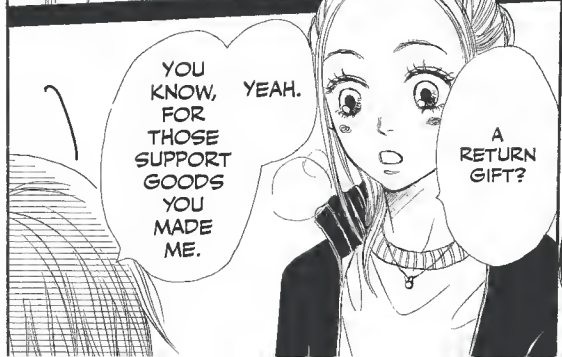
HEY.



I BROUGHT
YOU SOME-
THING. LIKE,
A RETURN
GIFT.

SO
WELL,
UM...

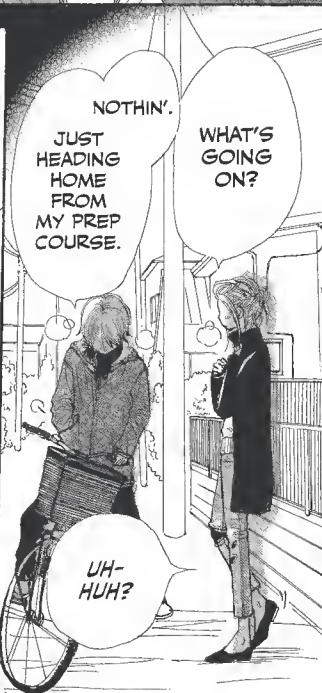
IT'S
JUST...



YOU
KNOW,
FOR
THOSE
SUPPORT
GOODS
YOU
MADE
ME.

YEAH.

A
RETURN
GIFT?



NOTHIN'.

JUST
HEADING
HOME
FROM
MY PREP
COURSE.

WHAT'S
GOING
ON?

UH-
HUH?

WELL,
THESE
AREN'T
JUST
ANY OLD
CHŪKA-
MAN,
OKAY?!

THEY'RE
NEW!!

UH-
HUH?

KRACK!!

WHAT
CAN I DO,
I GOT
NO TIME
TO GO
SHOPPING,
ALL
RIGHT?!

...thanks.

OMIGOOOOD!!
WHAT'D YOU
GET ME...?

All I
said was
"thanks."

CHINESE
BUNS.

SKEAM

WANNA HEAR
WHAT IT'S
CALLED? THE
"SPIDER-MAN."

ISN'T THAT
HILARIOUS?!
YOU
SHOULDA
SEEN WHAT
A HOOPLA
THEY MADE
ABOUT IT!

HAHAHA-
HAHA!
IT'S THE
SAME
OLD
PORK
FILLING
LIKE THE
USUAL
KIND!!

ISN'T IT
TOTALLY
STUPID?
TRY
EATING
ONE!!

HAHA-
HAHAHA!
THAT
IS SO
LAME!!



THANK
YOU.

IT
TOTALLY
CRACKED
ME UP.



ANY-
WAY.

SO I
THOUGHT
THAT WAS
PRETTY
FUNNY, AND
THAT'S WHY
I BROUGHT
YOU SOME.

...



OH
YEAH?
AND YOU
ALWAYS
LOOK SO
SMART?!

URGH!

YOU GOT
STEAMED
BUN
CRUMBS
ALL
AROUND
YOUR
MOUTH.

MAN,
YOU LOOK
IDIOTIC!



CAN YOU
GO OUT
ON NEW
YEAR'S
EVE?

OH!
WAIT,
ÔTANI!

I'LL
SEE
YA.



...I
GUESS
I CAN.

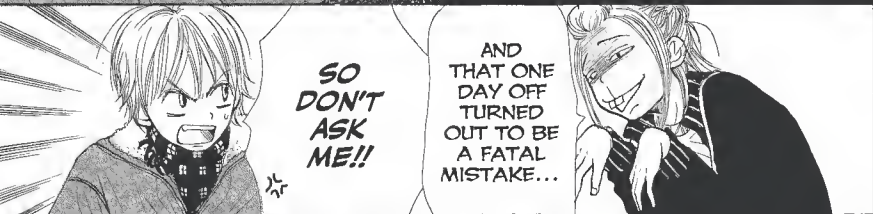
I CAN
TAKE
ONE DAY
OFF.

YOU
CAN'T
...?

...

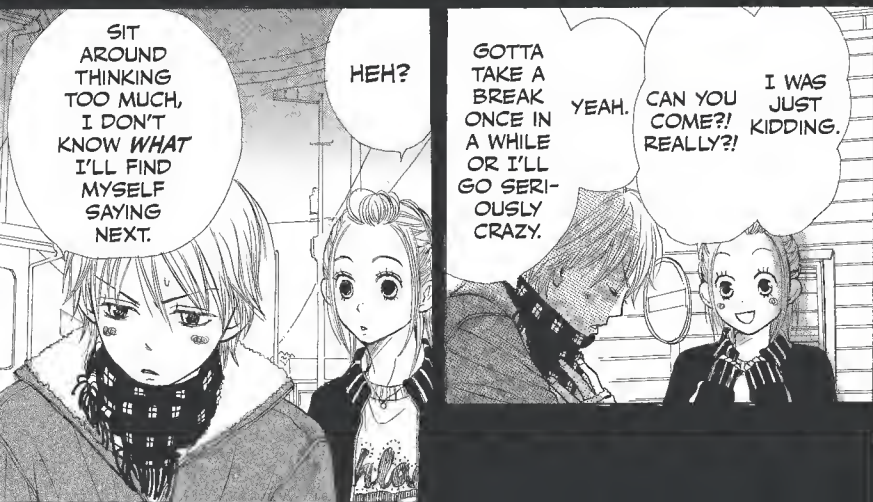
YEAH,
NOBU WAS
SAYING
LET'S
ALL GO
OUT AND
DO THE
COUNT-
DOWN.

NEW
YEAR'S
EVE?



SO
DON'T
ASK
ME!!

AND
THAT ONE
DAY OFF
TURNED
OUT TO BE
A FATAL
MISTAKE...



SIT
AROUND
THINKING
TOO MUCH,
I DON'T
KNOW *WHAT*
I'LL FIND
MYSELF
SAYING
NEXT.

HEH?

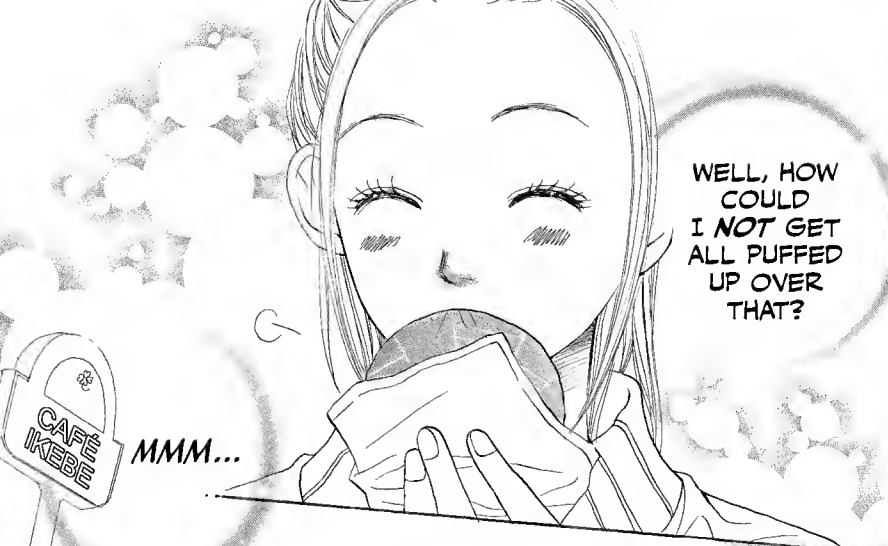
GOTTA
TAKE A
BREAK
ONCE IN
A WHILE
OR I'LL
GO SERI-
OUSLY
CRAZY.

YEAH.

CAN YOU
COME?!
REALLY?!

I WAS
JUST
KIDDING.





WELL, HOW
COULD
I **NOT** GET
ALL PUFFED
UP OVER
THAT?

MMM...



I'M
JUST SO
GLAD WE
MANAGED
TO MAKE
UP SO
FAST.



**GOOD
MORRR-
NING!**

I SWEAR,
IF WE'D
BROKEN UP
FOR REAL
THAT TIME,
I'D HAVE
BEEN DEAD
OF HEART-
BREAK
BEFORE
THE YEAR
WAS OUT.



I'D
TOTALLY
FOR-
GOTTEN
ABOUT...

OOPS.

OH,
HI...



GVOOON

... YOU
SURE
SEEM
TO BE IN
A GOOD
MOOD,
KOIZUMI-
SAN...



BA-
ZONK

HUH
...?
UH,
YEAH...



IT'S
OKAY...
YOU DON'T
HAVE
TO SAY
ANYTHING
...

KLUNK

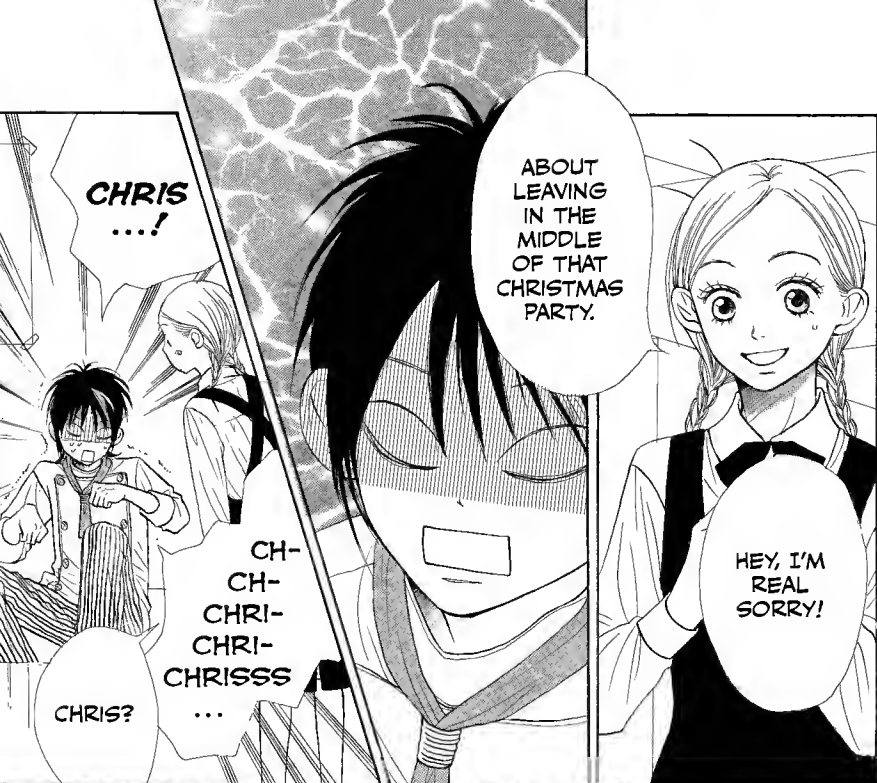
UMM...

... I
THOUGHT
YOU
MIGHT'VE
...



KOHORI-
KUN.
HOW'S IT
GOING
...?

DID YOU
MAYBE
GET BACK
TOGETHER
WITH YOUR
BOYFRIEND
OR SOME-
THING...?



GYAAAAAARGH!!

KOHORI-KUN!!

GYA...

LET'S
GET
BACK TO
WORK
NOW...

The night of
the party?
Miz M got really
drunk and was
all over him.
Sexual
harassment
'til dawn.

I
HAVE
NO
IDEA.

WHAT
HAPPENED
TO HIM?

Strange
boy.

IT'S
ABOUT
TIME YOU
GET TO
WORK TOO,
GIRLS!!

AND
EVER
SINCE, HIS
SHRIEKS
ECHO
THROUGH
THE
HALLS...

**WHAT?!
NO
WAY!**

HOPE
HE'S
GONNA
BE
OKAY...

BUT...

My
hat.

What's
that on
your
head?

I'm
back
from
my
break.

pot

...ÔTANI
MIGHT NOT
HAVE COME
LOOKING
FOR ME IF
KOHORI-KUN
HADN'T BEEN
THERE.

...CHRIST-
MAS
EVE...

*Damn,
I made a
mistake.
Here's
my hat.*

THANK
YOU,
KOHORI-
KUN.
AND
SORRY.

BYE,
MOM!
SEE YOU
LATER.

HEY!!
RISA,
THAT'S
FOR TOMOR-
ROW!

YOU
GOING
OUT
NOW? BE
CAREFUL.

A NEW
YEAR'S
EVE
COUNT-
DOWN...

I
WILL!

OOH,
THAT
LOOKS
SO
GOOD.
♡

HEH
HEH
HEH.

OMIGOD,
I THINK
THIS IS
A FIRST!
RISA'S
ACTUALLY
HERE
BEFORE
THE TIME
WE SAID!

HOW
EXCIT-
ING!

I GET
TO SEE
IN THE
NEW YEAR
TOGETHER
WITH
ÔTANI.

① X

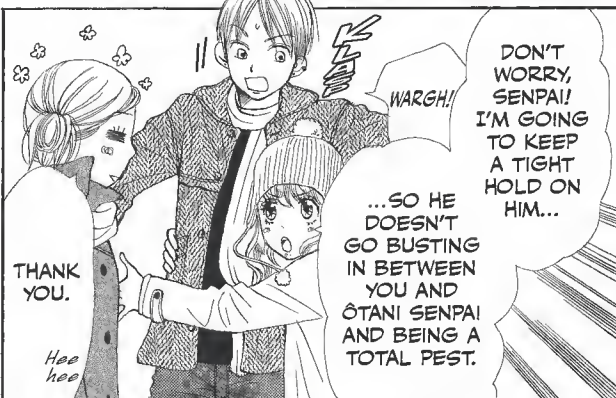
Hello, Nakahara here.

How are you all doing?

So...we're up to volume 11. That's getting up there to the number of volumes you want to sell off as one big collection. I mean, 11 volumes. That takes up a lot of shelf space!

I had past volumes lined up at the back of my desk for checking stuff while working, but I can't fit them all there anymore!! Well, I'm a very fortunate person indeed. I've never had the occasion to work on the same title for such a loooooong time before. So each episode's a new challenge for me. It's really, really scary while at the same time fun because of the discoveries I get to make. So I'm learning something with every episode. But there's so much more that I want to learn.

As a matter of fact, I happen to love studying. I'm having a lot of fun studying these days. What's the subject? How to make people laugh.





IT'S
BEEN A
WHILE *blah*
SINCE
WE'VE
BEEN
LIKE THIS.

WOW.

SHHH

THANK
YOU,
THANK
YOU.
♡

DON'T
RISE
TO IT,
YA
DOPE!!

WHA...?!



WARGH!!

I MEAN, MY
GOODNESS,
I NEVER
EVEN
DREAMED
THAT YOU
LOVED ME
SO MUCH.

YES, I AM
CARRIED
AWAY.
I'M COM-
PLETELY
SWEPT
AWAY.

...I
SWEAR,
THE WAY
YOU GET
CARRIED
AWAY.



WHAAT?
?!

WHAT'S
THAT
SUPPOSED
TO MEAN?!

AND
THAT'S
HOW
COME
I SAID
SOME-
THING
LIKE
THAT!!

LIKE I SAID!!
I WAS
STUDYING
SO HARD I
GOT KINDA
FUNNY IN THE
HEAD, OKAY?!
MY BRAIN
WAS FRIED!!



AND HERE
I WAS SO
EXCITED
THAT WE
GET TO BE
TOGETHER
TONIGHT.

THINK

I MEAN,
IT'S BEEN
FOREVER.
AND WHO
KNOWS
WHEN THE
NEXT TIME
WILL BE?

IT WAS
A MIRAGE!
A DREAM!

A
CHRISTMAS
FANTASY,
ALL
RIGHT?!

...



...IT'S CUZ
YOU HAVE
TO GO AND
BRING THAT
THING UP.

WHY CAN'T
YOU JUST
BE NICE
TO ME...?

WELL,
GOSH...

...



I
KNOW.

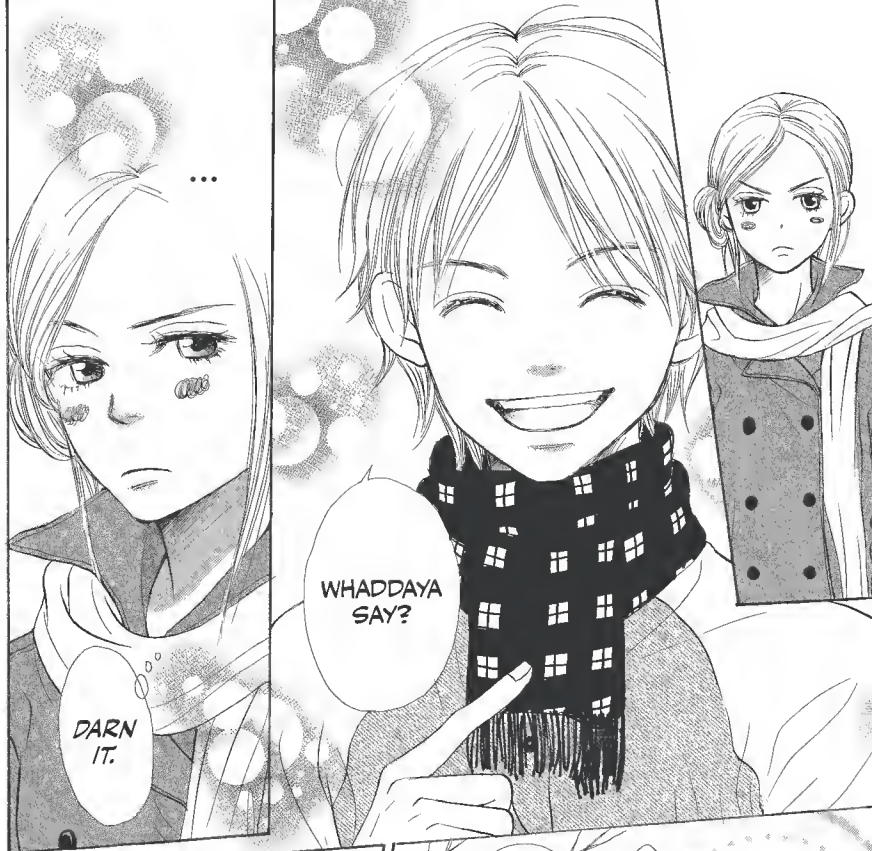
WHOEVER
LOSES
AT THE
GOLDFISH
SCOOP
TREATS
THE OTHER
ONE TO
TAKOYAKI!

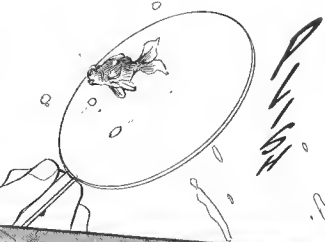
THE
EXTRA-
LARGE
KIND WITH
THE BIG
PIECES OF
OCTOPUS
INSIDE!



HEY,
KOIZUMI!
THERE'S
ALL THESE
FESTIVAL
STALLS
OUT!

OH, IS
THAT SO?
THANK
YOU FOR
BRINGING
IT TO MY
ATTENTION!!





DOES HE
EVEN
KNOW...

...THAT
LITTLE
THINGS HE
SAYS AND
DOES,
LIKE
THAT...

SO
THAT'S
ONE
FOR
ME...

GRR

Need!!
What're
you
talking
about?!

YEAH.
YOU'RE
RIGHT,
HONEY.

LET'S
LET THEM
ENJOY
SOME TIME
ALONE
TOGETHER.

HERE I
WAS SO
STOKED
ABOUT
IT...

...AND
HE HAS
TO SAY
IT WAS
BECAUSE
HIS BRAIN
WAS
FRIED!!

IT TURNS
OUT I
LOVE YOU
MORE
THAN I
THOUGHT.

...MAKE ME
REALLY
HAPPY OR
REALLY
DEPRESSED?

URGH.

W
A
G
H
!!

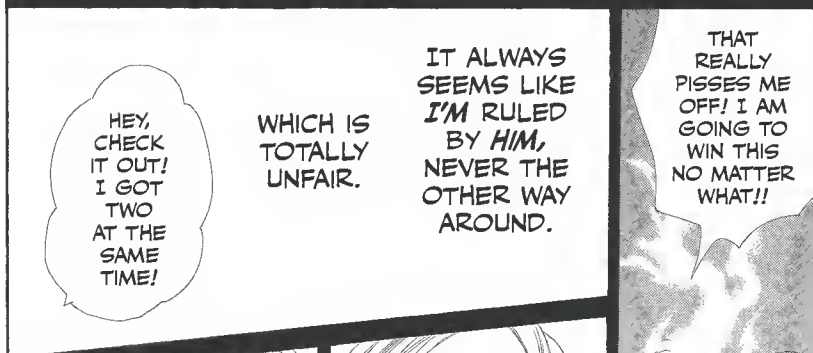
FWAP

ARRRGH!!



TOO
BAD!

AAAAGH!!
I
SCOOPED
THAT
ONE!!



HEY,
CHECK
IT OUT!
I GOT
TWO
AT THE
SAME
TIME!

WHICH IS
TOTALLY
UNFAIR.

IT ALWAYS
SEEMS LIKE
I'M RULED
BY HIM,
NEVER THE
OTHER WAY
AROUND.

THAT
REALLY
PISSES ME
OFF! I AM
GOING TO
WIN THIS
NO MATTER
WHAT!!



I
WIN.



WELL
SO AM
I, SO
THERE!!

BZZZZ

DOES
ÔTANI
EVER FEEL
RULED
BY THE
THINGS I
SAY AND
DO?

THAT
REALLY
PISSES
ME OFF!!

OH-
KAY!

YOU
STAY
RIGHT
THERE.

...ALL
RIGHT,
ALL
RIGHT.

NO YOU
COULDN'T,
CUZ I HAD
THREE
MORE
THAN YOU.

COME
ONNN,
ÔTANI, I'M
WAAAIT-
ING...I
WANT MY
TAKOYAKI
...

DARRRN
...

IF YOU
HADN'T
SMACKED
ME AND MADE
ME LOSE
THAT ONE
GOLDFISH, I
COULD'VE...

HANG
ON!

WORD
ON DA
STREET!
YOU
GOT A
PHONE
CALL!

YO!

WE
MANAGED
TO GET
BACK
TOGETHER,
SO LET'S
GET ALONG
TO GREET
THE NEW
YEAR.

OH
WELL.

YES! IT'S
LIKE, FIVE
MINUTES TO
MIDNIGHT!

AND
NOW
WE'RE
ALL
SPLIT
UP!

I THOUGHT
WE WERE
ALL GONNA
DO THE
NEW YEAR
COUNTDOWN!

IS IT
ALMOST
TIME?!

HI,
NOBU-
CHAN?

SO HOW
MUCH TIME
DO YOU
NEED ALONE
TOGETHER?!

DOO

DOO

DOO

DOO

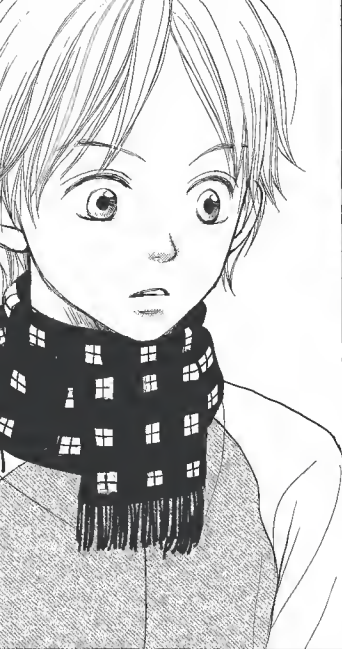
WHY
CAN'T I
GET
THROUGH
?!

GOTTA
CALL
OTANI...

OH NO!
THIS
SUCKS!

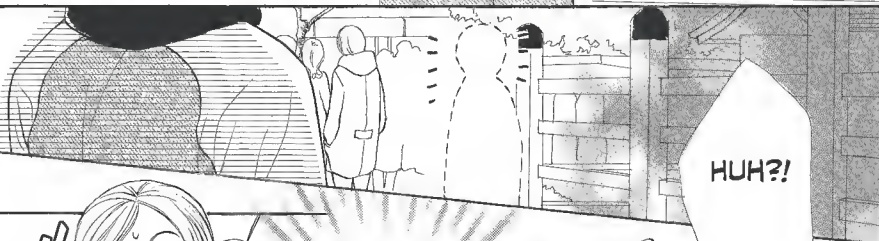
W
H
A
A
T
?!

OKAY,
SO WHERE
ARE YOU?
I'LL HEAD
STRAIGHT
OVER!



HEY
KOIZUMI,
THESE
TAKOYAKI
LOOK
SOOOO
GOOD...

ha
ha
ha



OH,
EXCUSE
ME.

WARGH!

GOTTA
FIND ÔTANI
BEFORE
IT'S TOO
LATE!!



HUH?!

WHERE
THE
HECK
DID SHE
GO?!



**OHHH-
TANIIII!**

HEY!

**I DON'T
WANT TO
START A
BRAND-
NEW YEAR
RACING
AROUND IN
A PANIC!!**

UH,
NO, UM,
THANKS,
BUT!
I'M IN A
HURRY,
SO...

AWW,
COME
ONNN,
DON'T
SAY
THAAAAT...

?!

YOU
WANT
ME TO
HE'P YOU
LOOOOOK?

YOU
LOOKIN'
FER
SOMEBODY,
YOUNG
LADYYYY?

FWOP ♥

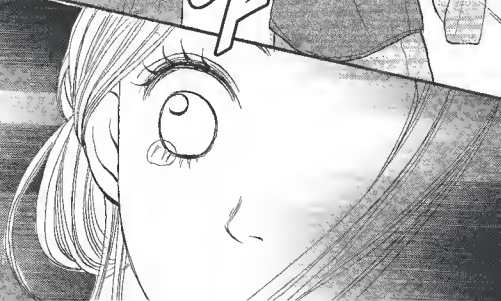
HEY...!

blake
blake
blake ♡

MMMM,
YOUR
HAND'S SO
NICE AND
SOFT,
MISSYYY.



HYAAAAAGH!!





WHAT
THE
HECK
DO YOU
THINK
YOU'RE
DOING,
POPS?!

ÔTANI...



YOU
KIDDING
ME?! FIND
SOME-
BODY
ELSE!!

DON'T
EVEN
THINK
ABOUT
TOUCHING
KOIZUMI,
YOU OLD
PERV!!

AWW,
I AIN'T
DONE
NOTHING...

JUST
WANTED
TO MAKE
FRIENDS
WITH THE
YOUNG
LADYYY...



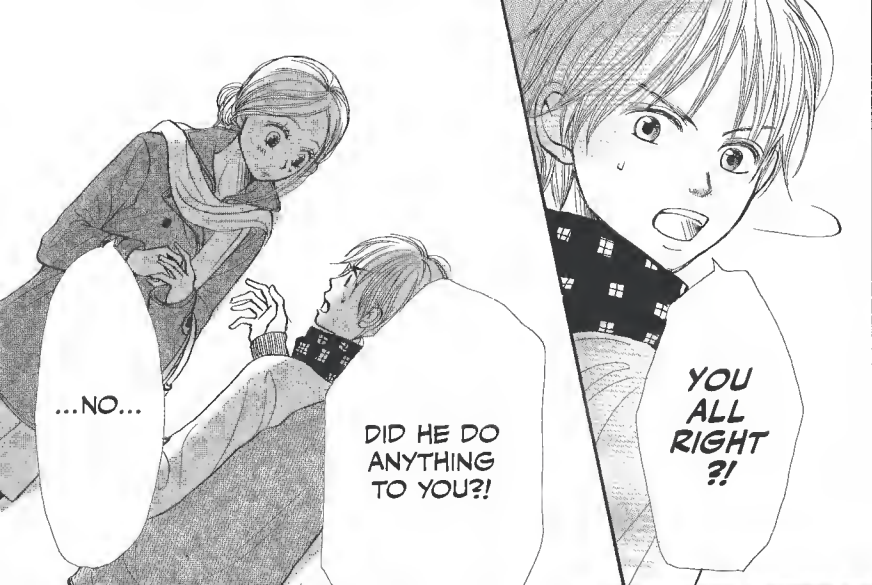
FINE,
I'LL FIND
SOMEBODY
ELSE...

NO
NEED TO
GET SO
MAAAD.

CALM ...GEE.
DOWN,
KIDDO.



HEY,
GIRRRLS
...



...NO...

DID HE DO
ANYTHING
TO YOU?!

YOU
ALL
RIGHT
?!



ÔTANI

...

...

SHOOT
...

I WAS
LOOKING
FORWARD
TO
EATING
THESE...

OH.
GOOD.



...AS IF,
STUPID.

...WHAT
YOU
JUST
SAID
TO THE
GUY?

WAS THAT
ALSO
BECAUSE
YOU GOT
FUNNY IN THE
HEAD FROM
STUDYING
TOO HARD?



IT TURNS
OUT I
LOVE YOU
MORE THAN
I THOUGHT.

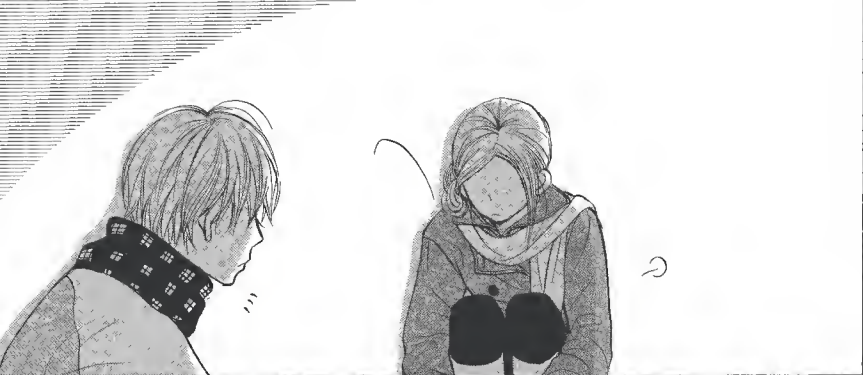
YOU
WERE
SERIOUS
THAT
TIME
TOO,
WEREN'T
YOU?

...

OH.
UH-
HUH.

I WAS
SERIOUSLY
PISSED
OFF AT
THAT GUY.

HEY,
ÔTANI...



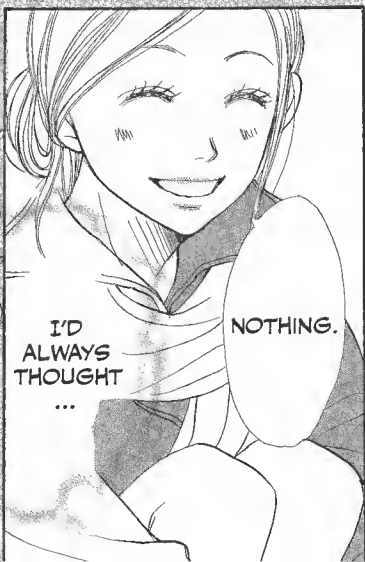
...THAT
IF YOU
TOOK OUR
FEELINGS
FOR EACH
OTHER
AND
WEIGHED
THEM...

...MINE
WOULD
SEND THE
NEEDLE
STRAIGHT
OFF THE
DIAL,
BUT HIS
WOULDN'T
EVEN
COME
CLOSE.

NOW,
THOUGH
...



...WHAT?



I'D
ALWAYS
THOUGHT
...

NOTHING.



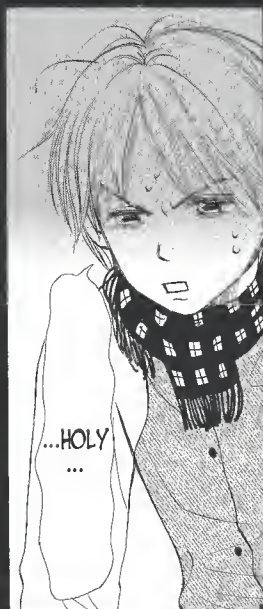
I'M
NOT SO
SURE
ABOUT
THAT.



...HE
LOVES
ME A LOT
MORE THAN
HE LETS
ON?



MAYBE...



...HOLY
...



WHAT'S
THE
MATTER,
ÔTANI?



KAT
H
H
H



YOU WERE
SO COOL,
ÔTANI.
MY HERO!

OH,
YEAH.
COME
ON.

I'M
SERIOUS.

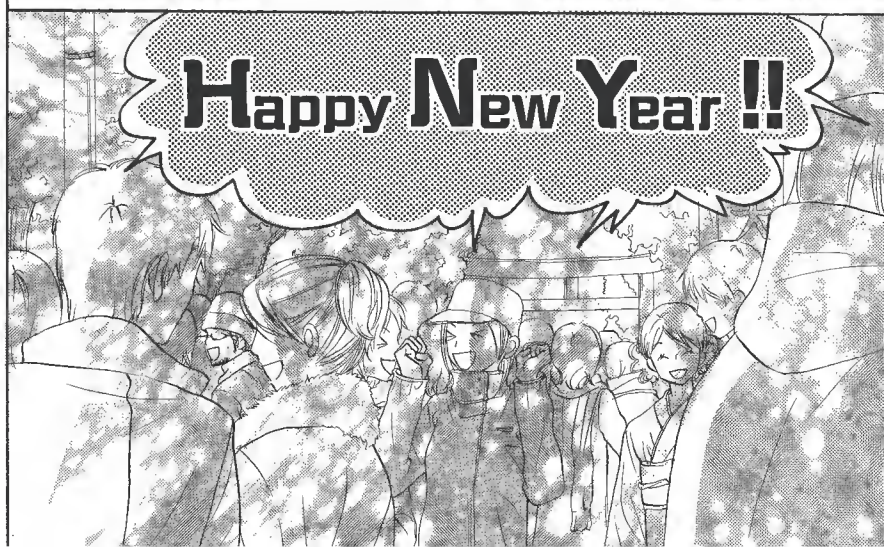


...MOLY
...!

THANK
GOD THAT
OLD GUY
DIDN'T TRY
ANYTHING
WITH YOU!

IT'S LIKE,
ONLY
HITTING ME
NOW—I'M
TOTALLY
FREAKING
OUT!

TH
U
D
TH
U
D





AND WE
WERE
JUST
STANDING
THERE
GOING,
"HUH"?

HEE
HEE
HEE
HEE.

THE
WHOLE
THING'S
OVER.
THAT
WAS THE
COUNT-
DOWN!

WOOO-
HOOO!

HAPPY
NEW
YEAR!

OMIGOSH,
IT'S A
NEW YEAR!



I
LOVE
YOU,
ÔTANI.

ARGH!

AND I WAS
SO EXCITED
ABOUT
DOING THE
COUNTDOWN
WITH RISA
TOO!

Where
is she?

...DOES
IT REALLY
HAVE
TO BE
KOIZUMI
SENPAI
FOR YOU?

HUH?



THUNK

SEIKO...

DON'T
TELL
ME...

DO YOU WANT
TO KNOW THE
REAL REASON I
ASKED YOU TO
COME ALONG
TONIGHT...?



SEIKO...

IT
WAS
JUST...

...SO
WE'D HAVE
AN EVEN
NUMBER
OF
PEOPLE...



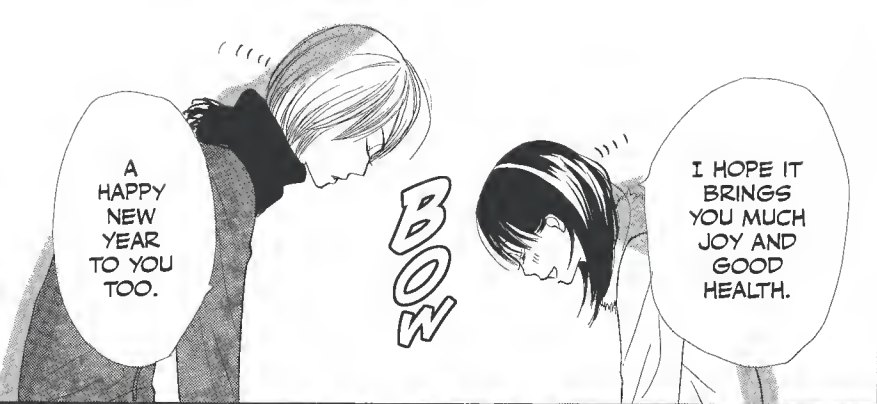
HAPPY
NEW
YEAR.

WHAT
DID
YOU
JUST
SAY?!

PLUS, YOU'VE
JUST BEEN
A REAL
PAIN-IN-
THE-
DERRIERE
ALL
NIGHT!

I
WOULD
RATHER
WEAR
AN UGLY
OUTFIT
THAN SAY
SOME-
THING
THAT
YUCKY!

AFTER
THAT
BUILD-UP,
YOU
GOTTA
SAY YOU
LOVE
ME!!



A
HAPPY
NEW
YEAR
TO YOU
TOO.

I HOPE IT
BRINGS
YOU MUCH
JOY AND
GOOD
HEALTH.



HEY,
BABY?

MM?

SO I
GUESS WE
ALL GOT
TOGETHER
FOR
NOTHING.
EVERYBODY'S
JUST DOING
THEIR OWN
THING.

tee
hee



...IF I
SAID I
MIGHT
LEAVE
OSAKA
THIS
COMING
SPRING?

WHAT
WOULD
YOU
SAY...



JUST
STAY
WITH ME,
FOREVER
AND
EVER...

Yakitori!!
Yakitori!!
Yakitori!!

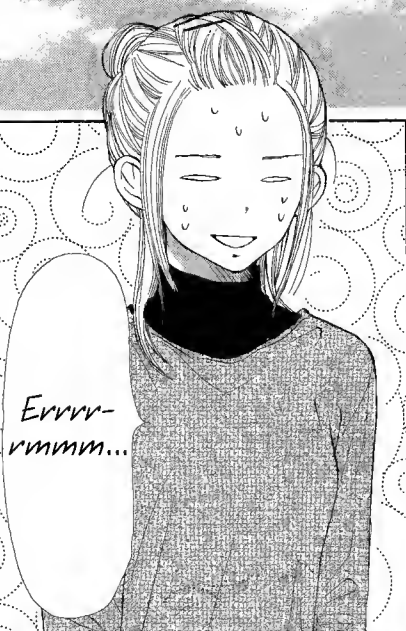
Grilled Corn on the Cob

I heard
you the
first time!
What
are you,
literally
starving?

...AND
GET TO
LOVE ME
MORE
AND
MORE,
OKAY?

THIS
YEAR,
AND NEXT
YEAR,
AND THE
YEAR
AFTER
THAT...

IT'S THE
LAST TERM
OF OUR
LAST YEAR
IN HIGH
SCHOOL...



Errrrr-
rrrrrr...

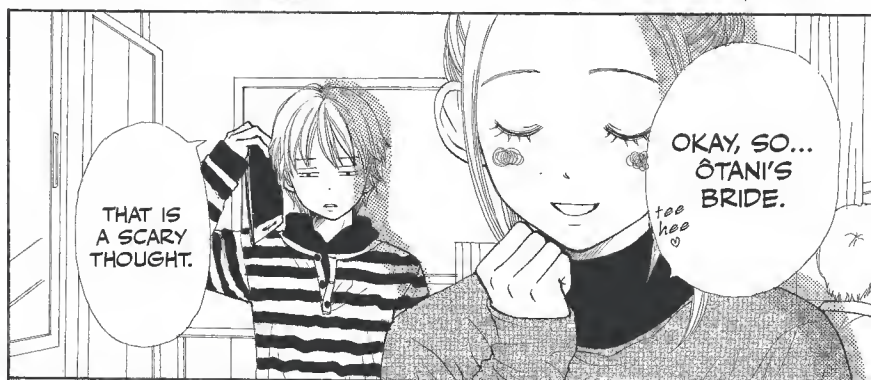
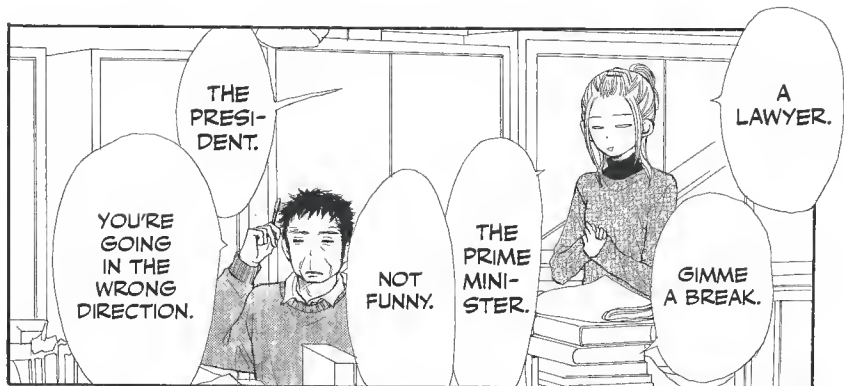
WELL,
WHAT
DO YOU
WANT
TO BE?

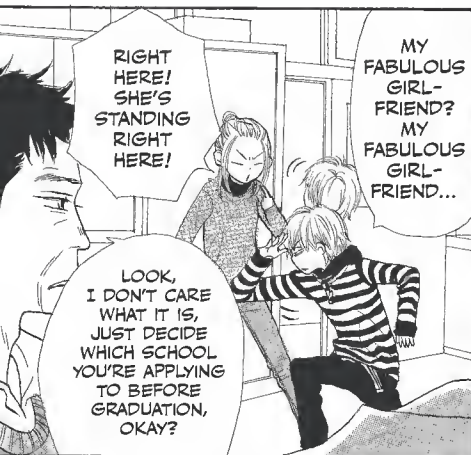


I GUESS
I'M ABOUT
THE ONLY
ONE WHO
HASN'T
DECIDED
WHAT TO
DO WITH
MYSELF
STARTING
IN APRIL.



CHAPTER 42





RIGHT
HERE!
SHE'S
STANDING
RIGHT
HERE!

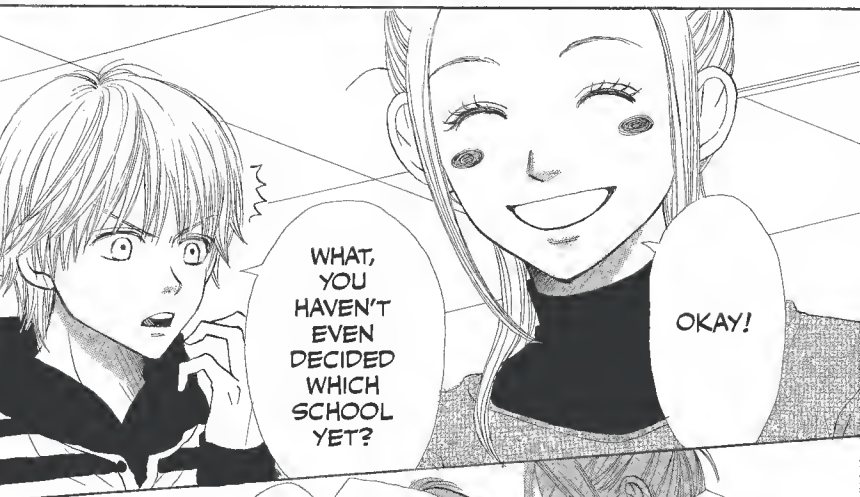
MY
FABULOUS
GIRL-
FRIEND?
MY
FABULOUS
GIRL-
FRIEND...

LOOK,
I DON'T CARE
WHAT IT IS,
JUST DECIDE
WHICH SCHOOL
YOU'RE APPLYING
TO BEFORE
GRADUATION,
OKAY?



YOUR
FABULOUS
GIRLFRIEND'S
STANDING
THERE SAYING
SHE WANTS TO
BE YOUR BRIDE,
AND ALL YOU
CAN SAY IS,
THAT'S A SCARY
THOUGHT?!

WHAT?



WHAT,
YOU
HAVEN'T
EVEN
DECIDED
WHICH
SCHOOL
YET?

OKAY!



HEY, IF
ISHIHARA'S
STILL THERE
IN THE CLASS-
ROOM, HAVE
HER COME
SEE ME.

OH
YEAH.

DON'T
HEX
ME, YA
DOPE!
THAT
WAS
SERI-
OUSLY
BAD
LUCK!!

OH LEAVE
ME ALONE,
MR. SCARY
THOUGHT!
**HERE'S A SCARY
THOUGHT FOR
YOU: MAY YOU
SLEEP LATE THE
MORNING OF
YOUR EXAM!!**

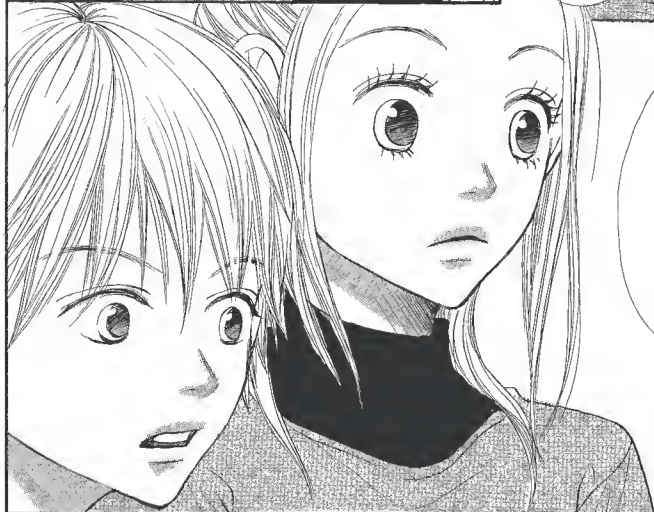


A CHANGE
OF PLANS?
WHAT,
THE JUNIOR
COLLEGE
SHE'S
APPLYING
TO?

YEAH.
DON'T
TELL
ME YOU
DIDN'T
KNOW
ABOUT
THIS?

YEAH, THAT
WAS A REAL
SUDDEN
CHANGE OF
PLANS. WE
GOT A LOT
OF FORMS
TO FILL OUT,
DEADLINES
TO MEET,
STUFF LIKE
THAT.

YOU
MEAN
NOBU?



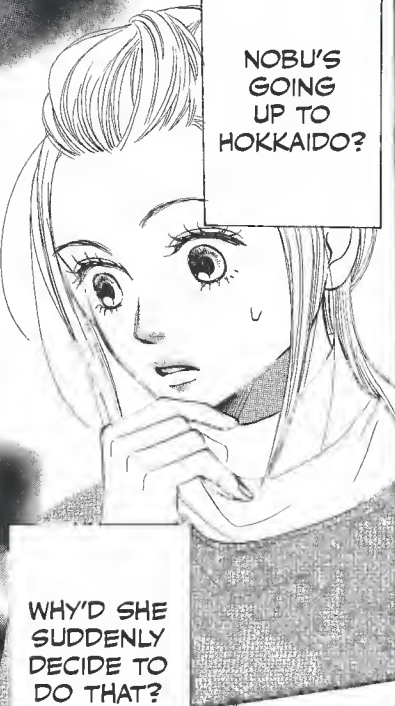
SHE'S
APPLYING
TO A
SCHOOL
UP IN
HOKKAIDO.



HO...

HO.

HO
...?!



NOBU'S
GOING
UP TO
HOKKAIDO?

WHY'D SHE
SUDDENLY
DECIDE TO
DO THAT?



HOK-
KAIDO?!

SAY
"HOCKEY-
D'OH!,"
AND
YOU'RE
DUST.

...

pttt



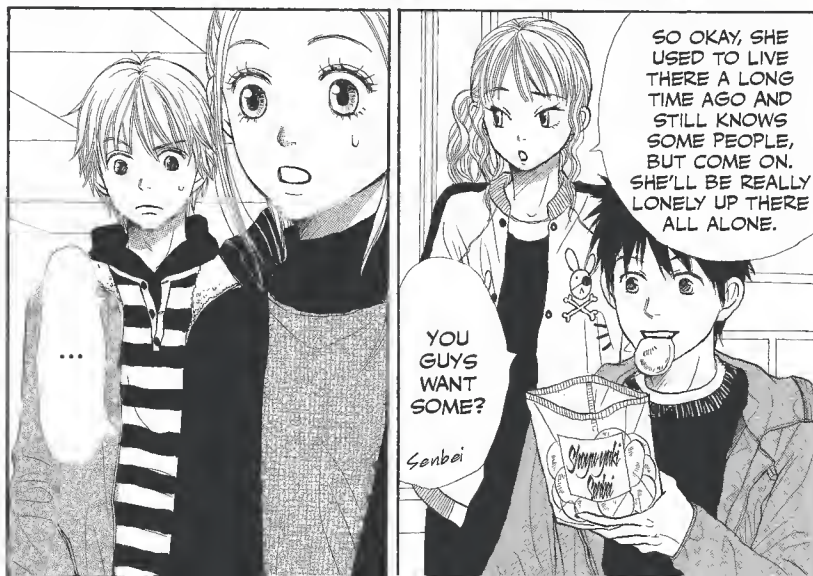
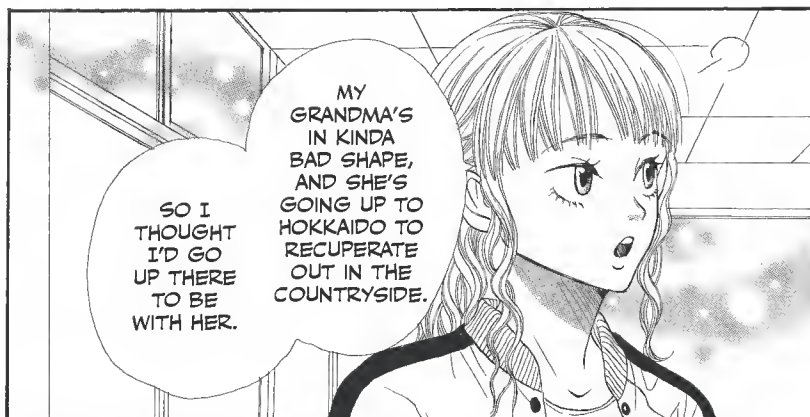
ONE OF
YOUR
PARENTS
GOT
TRANS-
FERRED
THERE?

SO
HOW
COME,
THEN?

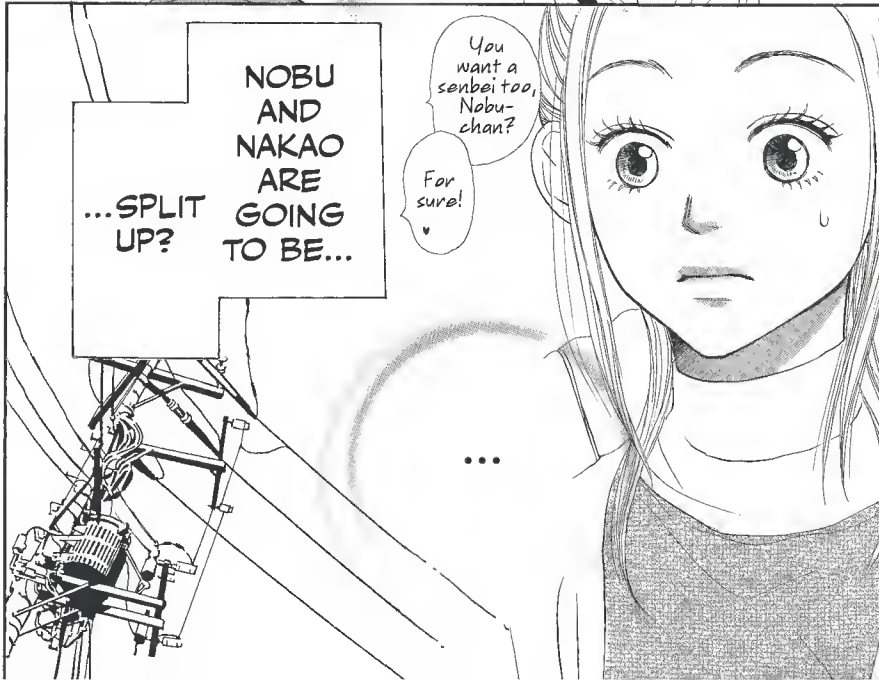


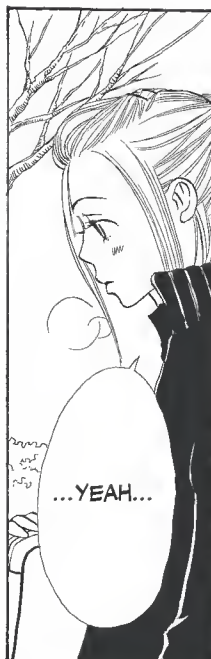
THAT'S
GOT
NOTHING
TO WITH IT.

I MEAN,
SURE, I
THOUGHT IT
WAS REALLY
NICE TOO
WHEN WE
WENT UP
THERE ON
OUR CLASS
TRIP, BUT...









...YEAH...



THOSE
TWO ARE
NUTS
ABOUT
EACH
OTHER.

IT
OUGHT
TO BE
OKAY.
I MEAN,
COME
ON...

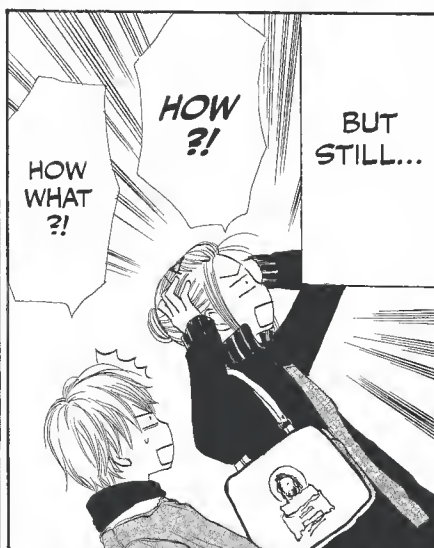
I DON'T
KNOW
HOW
THAT'S
GOING
TO
WORK
OUT.



HUH?

HOW CAN
SHE DO IT?!
I COULD
NEVER GO
OFF ALONE
LIKE THAT!

I MEAN,
MY
GOSH...



HOW
WHAT
?!

**HOW
?!**

BUT
STILL...

KOI-
ZUMI...

I MEAN,
JUST
TALKING
ON THE
PHONE?

I
COULDN'T
STAND IT,
I JUST
COULDN'T.

LIVING
FAR AWAY
FROM
YOU? FOR
A FEW
YEARS...?

HEY! LIKE
I'M A
MUNCHKIN
OR SOME-
THING!!

IT'S NOT THE
SAME. I NEED
TO SEE YOU IN
PERSON. I NEED
TO LOOK DOWN
AT THE TOP OF
YOUR HEAD AND
TALK TO YOU
THAT WAY.

HOW
COULD
SHE
DO IT?

YOU
SAID,
"THE TOP
OF MY
HEAD"!!!

NO,
I MEANT,
I NEED TO
TALK TO
YOU FACE-
TO-FACE.

2 8

Writing something serious for a change has made me hungry. I'm a small eater though, so I can never put away much. The single portions of this world are too big, if you ask me. Don't you think? My mom always makes a ton of food when she cooks, saying, "If you can't eat it, just leave it," so I guess my habit of leaving things on my plate comes from that too. Shame on me! Even now I live real close to my parents' house, so my mom comes over to cook for me, which is very nice of her, but you wouldn't believe what she makes.

Dinner one evening

Ramen

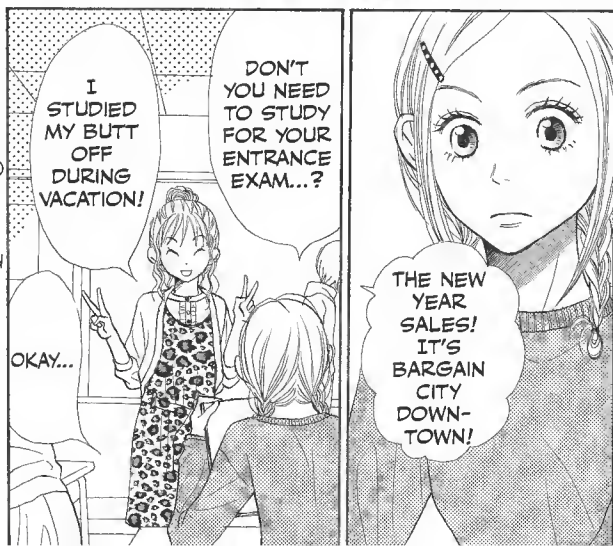


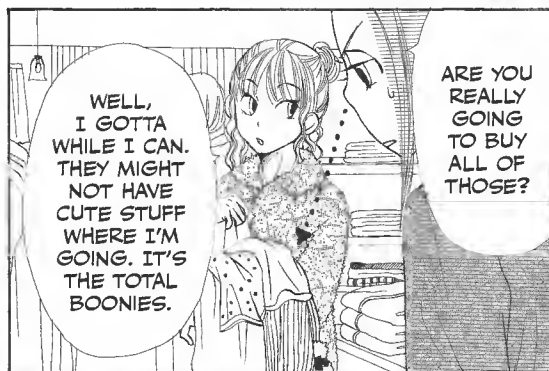
Super-greasy
"shiny fried rice"
(a signature dish)

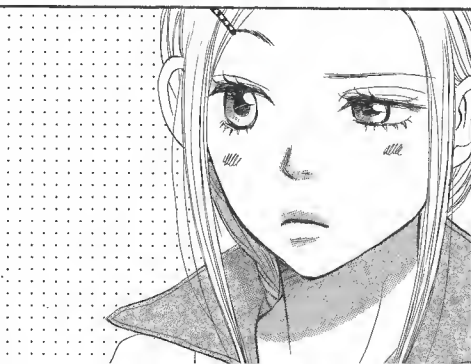
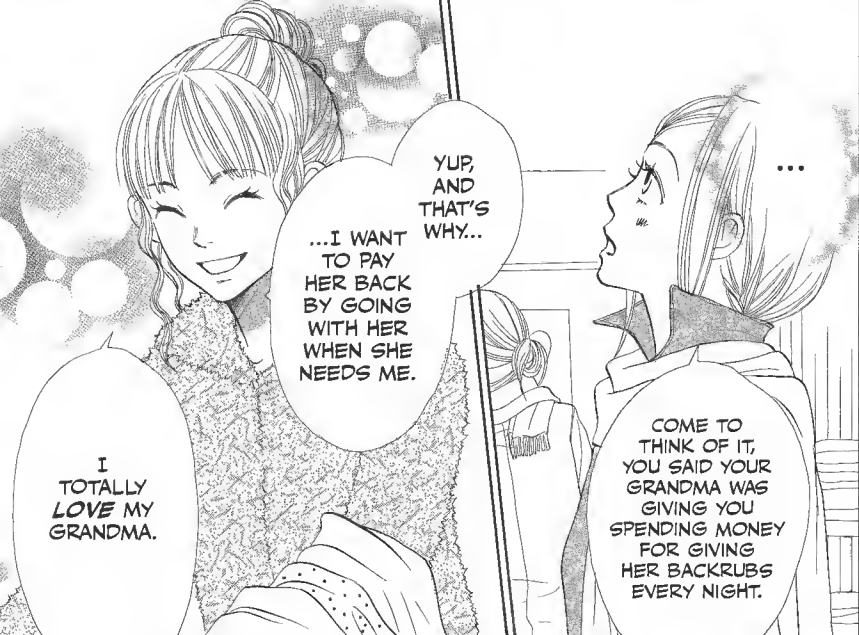


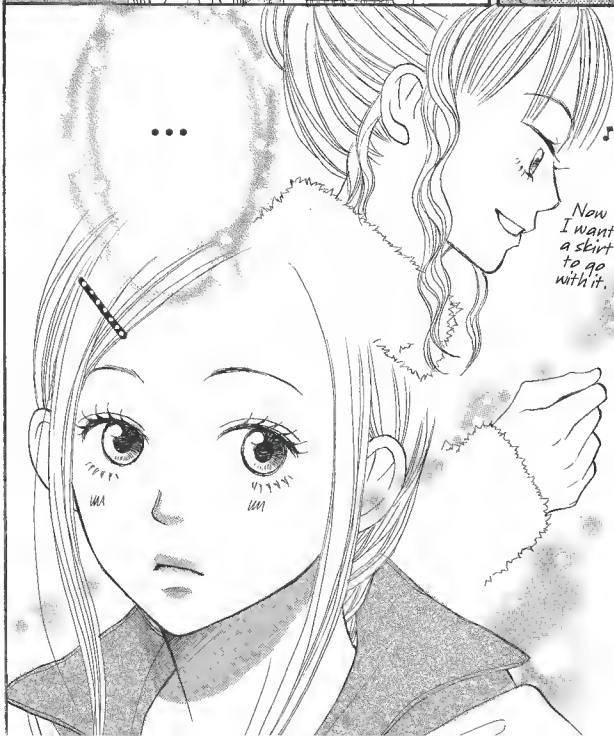
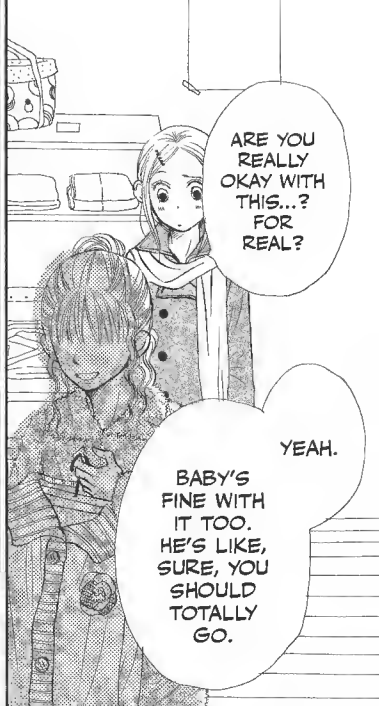
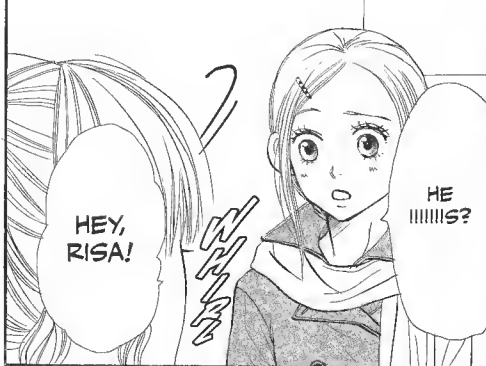
Meat

And then, imagine hearing, "I'm just trying up some breaded prawns for you." I mean, my god, this is a meal that you get full just looking at. Plus, the prawns come with the heads attached. They're huge. This is what she considers one person's portion. Spare me, please...









SO I
GUESS
SHE'S
PRETTY
SURE SHE
CAN MAKE
IT WORK,
EVEN IF
THEY'RE
FAR APART.

WELL...

NOBU'S
ALWAYS SO
TOGETHER.
SO IN
CHARGE
OF EVERY-
THING.

...YOU KNOW,
I'M GOING
TO MISS YOU
A LOT TOO,
IF YOU GO
AWAY...

REALLY?
THANK
YOU,
RISA.

Oh,
wow!

MAYBE I
DON'T NEED
TO WORRY
SO MUCH
ABOUT HER
AND NAKAO
BEING
SPLIT UP.

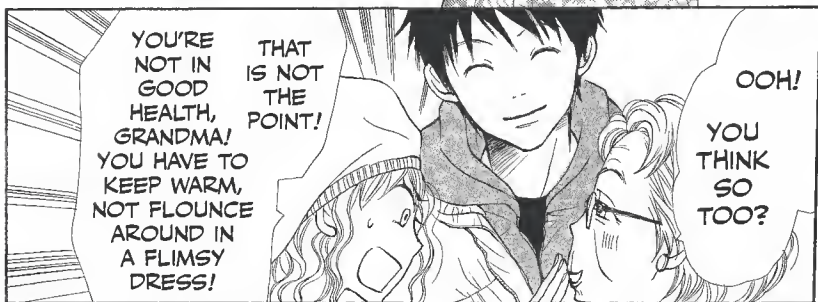
MAYBE
IT ISN'T
SUCH A
BIG DEAL
AFTER
ALL.

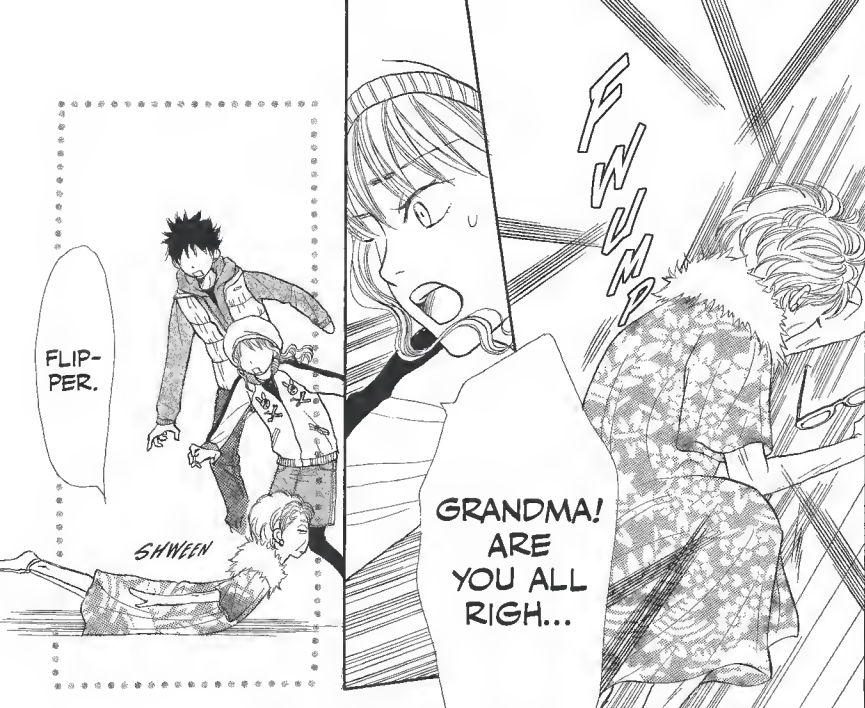
OHhh,
HOW NICE
TO HAVE
YOU
HERE!
I'VE BEEN
WAITING
FOR
YOU!

HELLOOOO!

I'M
HOOO-
ME!

AND MY
DARLING'S
HERE WITH
ME TOO!





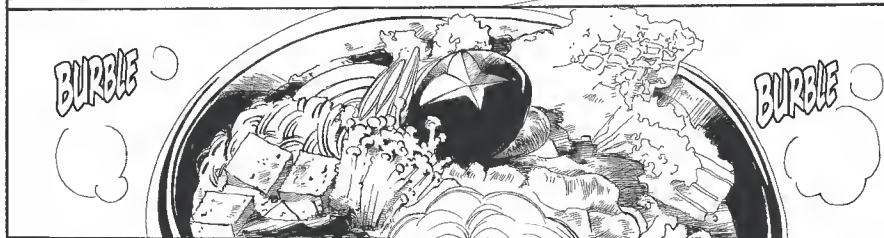


BREATHING
THE CLEAN
AIR THEY'VE
GOT UP IN
HOKKAIDO'S
GONNA MAKE
HER GET
BETTER IN
NO TIME.

YEAH.

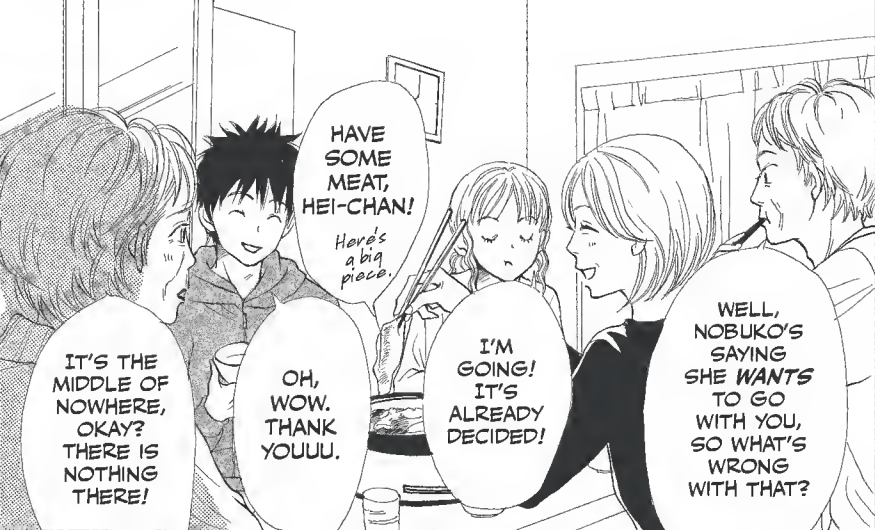
koff

koff



I AM
GOING
TO BE
PERFECTLY
FINE UP
THERE ON
MY OWN!

I
MEAN
IT!



IT'S THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE, OKAY? THERE IS NOTHING THERE!

HAVE SOME MEAT, HEI-CHAN!

Here's a big piece.

OH, WOW. THANK YOUUU.

I'M GOING! IT'S ALREADY DECIDED!

WELL, NOBUKO'S SAYING SHE WANTS TO GO WITH YOU, SO WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT?



HA HA HA!

That was so funny.

OH. BABY? YOU WANT ME TO GET YOU AN EGG?

YOU WON'T BE MAKING ANYBODY LAUGH IF YOU DO "FLIPPER" ALL BY YOURSELF?

SO WHO'RE YOU GOING TO TALK TO EVERY DAY UP THERE IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE, HUH?



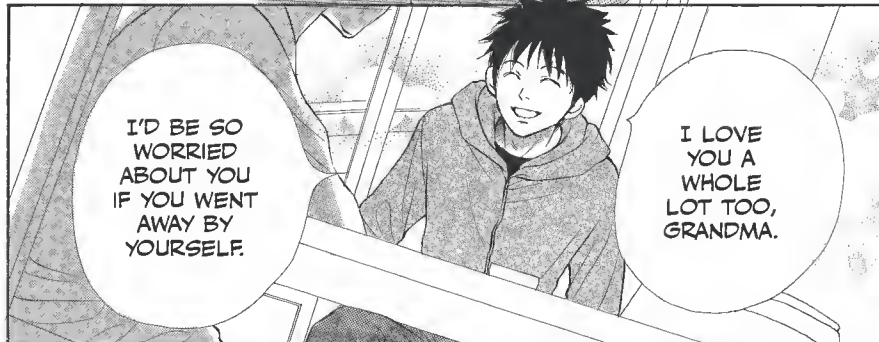
MIND WHAT?

YOU DON'T MIND, HEI-CHAN...?

Oh.
COULD YOU? THANKS!

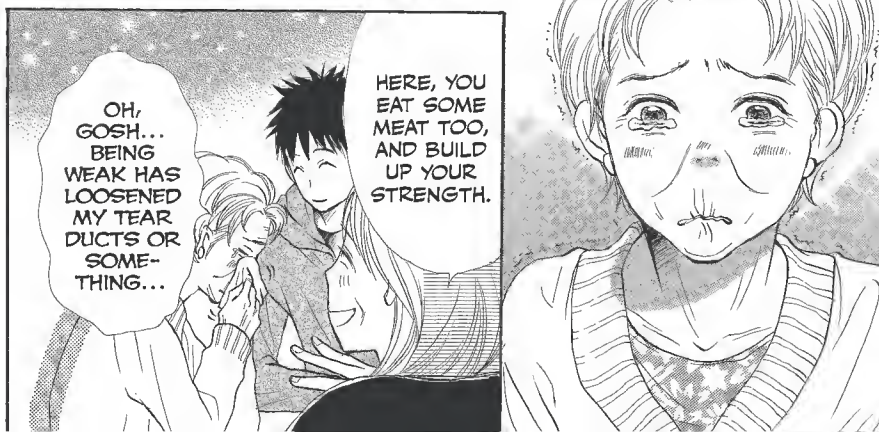


IS IT
REALLY
ALL RIGHT
WITH YOU
IF I TAKE
NOBU-CHAN
FAR AWAY...?



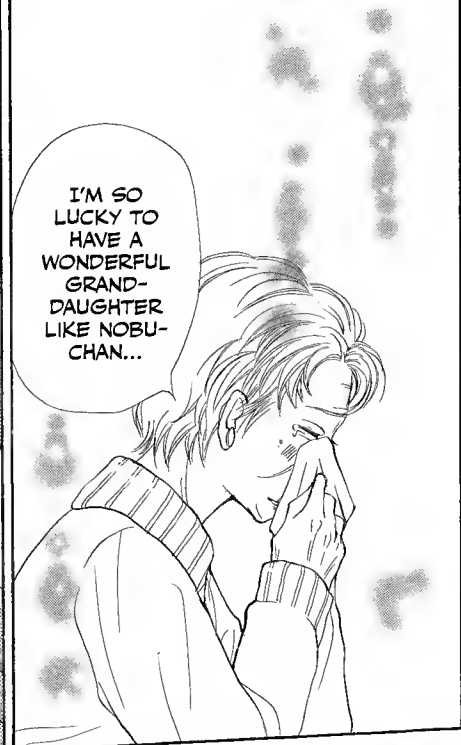
I'D BE SO
WORRIED
ABOUT YOU
IF YOU WENT
AWAY BY
YOURSELF.

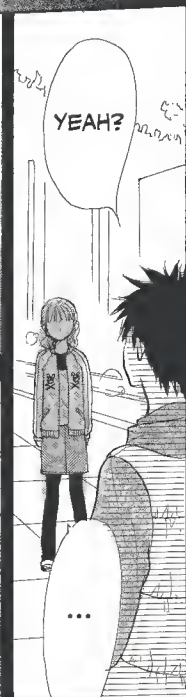
I LOVE
YOU A
WHOLE
LOT TOO,
GRANDMA.



OH,
GOSH...
BEING
WEAK HAS
LOOSENED
MY TEAR
DUCTS OR
SOME-
THING...

HERE, YOU
EAT SOME
MEAT TOO,
AND BUILD
UP YOUR
STRENGTH.







OKAY.



...
NOTHING.
FORGET IT.



YEAH.
GOOD-
NIGHT,
HON!



GOOD
NIGHT,
NOBU-
CHAN.

SO I'LL
SEE YOU
TOMORROW.

SO
THERE IS
NOTHING
MORE I
CAN SAY
ABOUT IT.

IT'S
NOBU'S
LIFE,
AND SHE
DECIDED
TO DO
THIS.

hff

PLUS, THIS
IS NOBU AND
NAKAO WE'RE
TALKING
ABOUT.
THEY'LL BE
OKAY NO
MATTER WHAT.

Bzz

FOR
SURE.

LIKE IN
WHAT
WAY?

I'M
TELLING
YOU, THE
DUDE'S
ACTING
REALLY
STRANGE.

Catch ya
later!

HEH?



LIKE,
WE GO
TO THE
BATHROOM
AND HE
WALKS
STRAIGHT
INTO THE
GIRLS'
SIDE?



AND THEN
WE'RE
WALKING
DOWN
THE HALL
AND HE
SAYS HI
TO A
BUCKET?



DID YOU
TELL
HER
ABOUT
THIS?

PROBABLY.



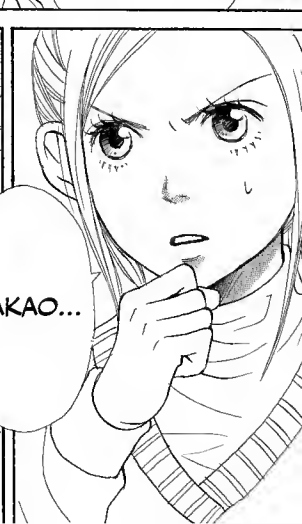
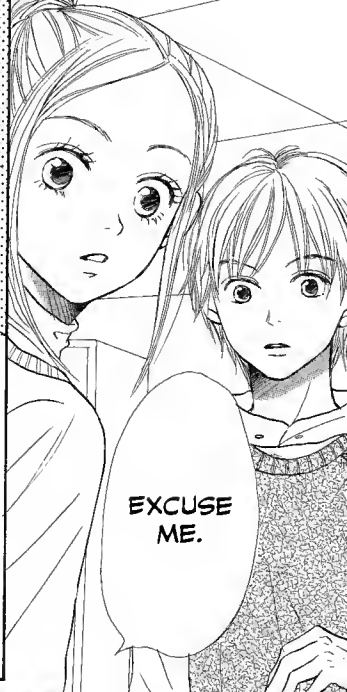
IT'S
GOTTA BE
BECAUSE
OF NOBU
GOING AWAY.
DON'T YOU
THINK?

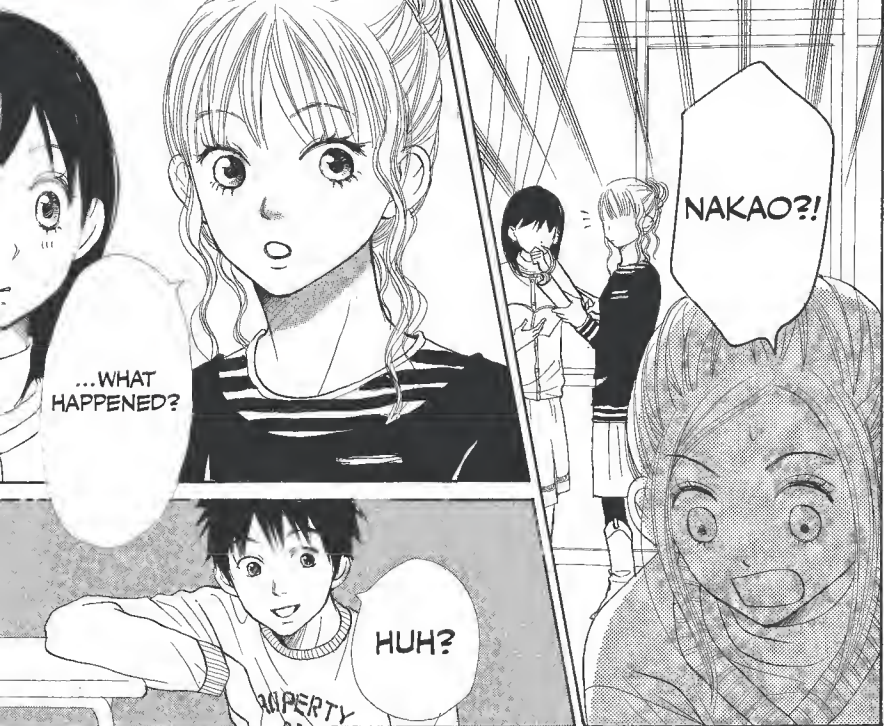


SOME-
THING IS
SERIOUSLY
WRONG
WITH
THE GUY.



WHAAT
?!





HE IS
SERIOUSLY
LOSING IT.

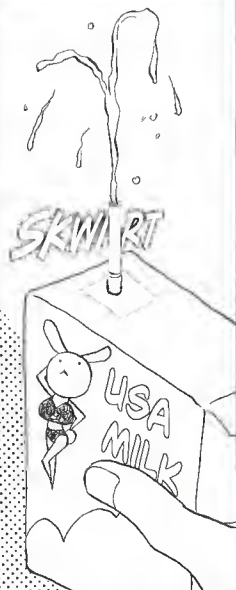
GIRLS
CHANGING
ROOM

KA-
CHAK

OH,
WOW,
YEAHHH...
THAT'S
REALLY
NEAT...

NAKAO!
YOUR
MILK!
IT'S
SQUIRT-
ING OUT!

HUH?!




THE
CLOSER
WE GET
TO NOBU'S
ENTRANCE
EXAMS...

...THE
MORE
NAKAO
SEEMS
TO BE
FALLING
APART.

WRONG
DOOR!!

ARE YOU
DOING
THIS ON
PURPOSE
?!



YEAH, CUZ
HE ALWAYS
STRAIGHTENS
UP AND ACTS
NORMAL
AROUND
HER. GUESS
THAT'S
MAXING
HIM OUT.

I DON'T
THINK
NOBU-
CHAN'S
NOTICED
HOW HE'S
ACTING.



HUH?



YEAH.



RIGHT?

LOTS
OF TIMES,
BUT HE
JUST GOES,
"I'M FINE."
YOU CAN'T GET
ANYTHING
ELSE OUT
OF HIM.



HAVE
YOU
TRIED
TALKING
TO HIM?

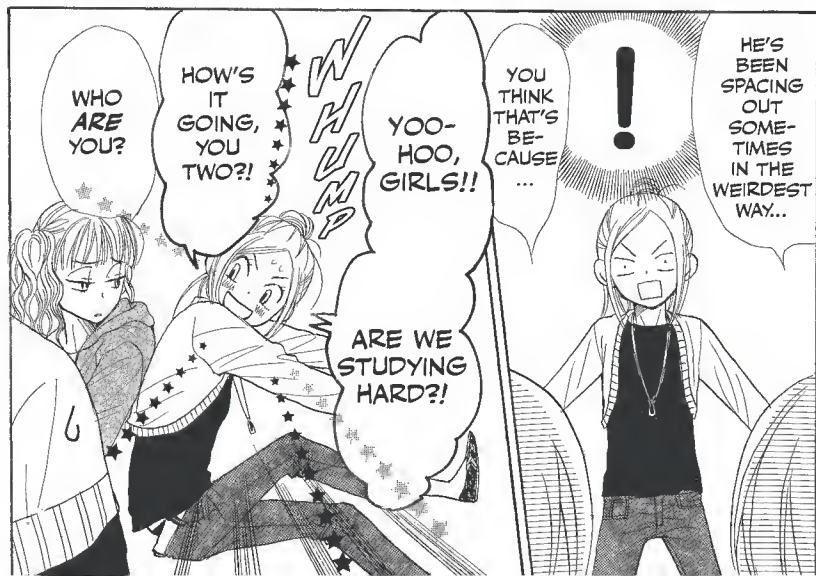
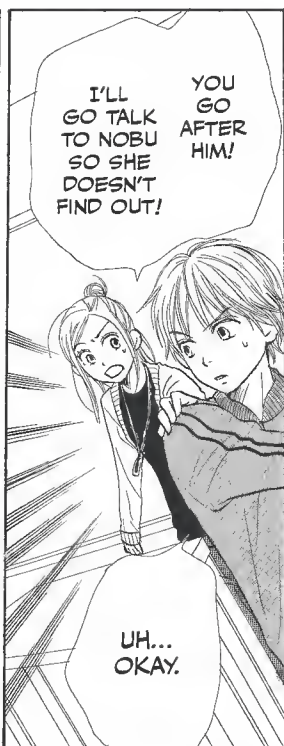
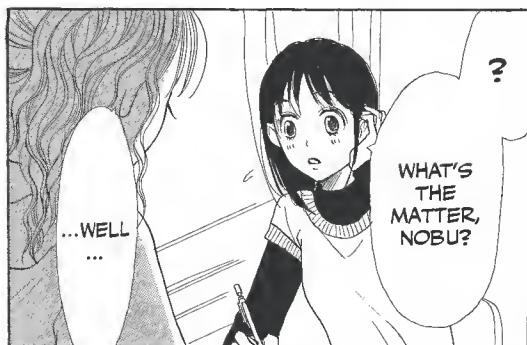


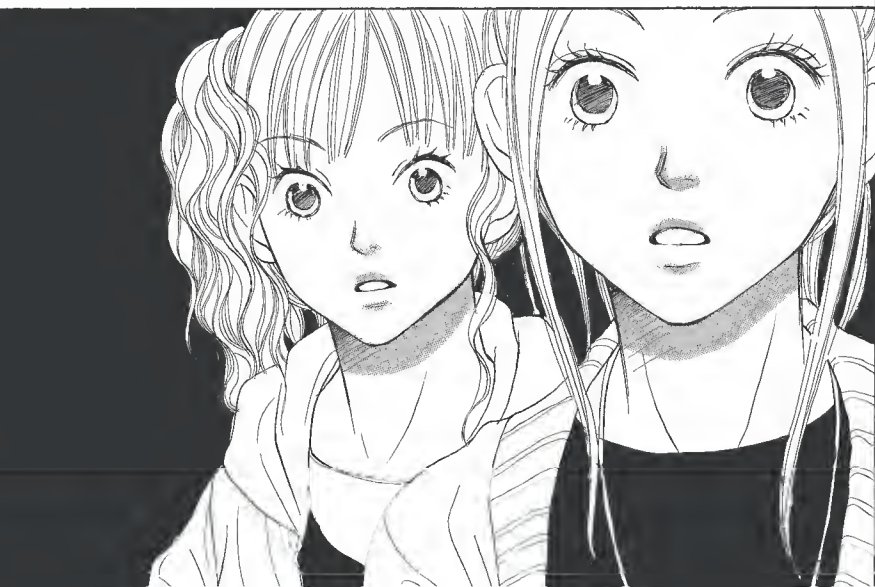
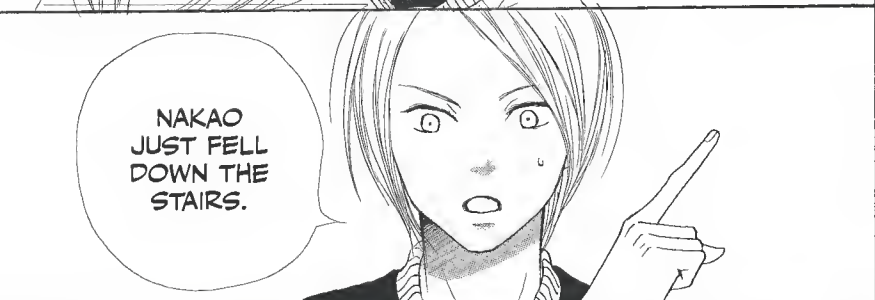
THERE
HE GOES
AGAIN,
WANDERING
OFF LIKE A
ZOMBIE!

HEY!

FWOOO

KTUN







SHWAP



W
H
A
A
A
T
?!

NURSE







BUT YOU
CAN'T TELL
HER THAT.

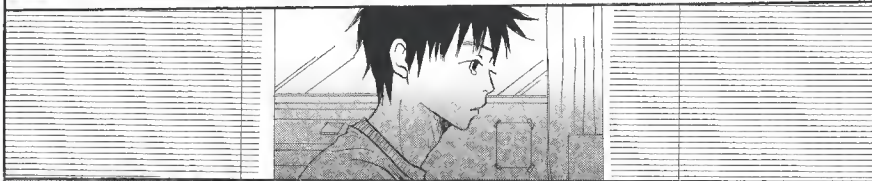
SWEAR
YOU WON'T
TELL HER.



NO.



THIS IS
SOMETHING
NOBU-CHAN
DECIDED TO
DO. I DON'T
WANT TO
HOLD HER
BACK.





WHAT'S
THE
MATTER,
RISA?

...NOBU'S
ALWAYS
THERE
FOR ME.

WHEN-
EVER I
NEED
ANY
HELP...





HAVE
YOU
LOST
YOUR
MIND?!

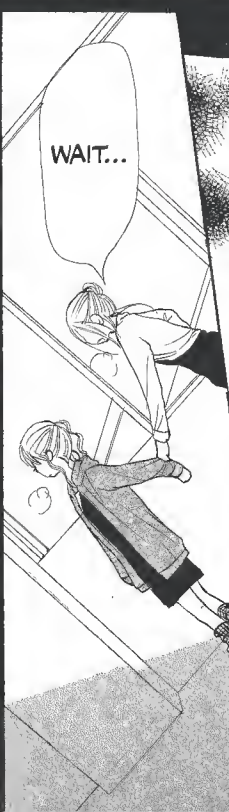
SHE
ALWAYS
CHEERS
ME UP
WHEN
I GET
DEPRESSED

...AND
GETS ON
MY CASE
WHEN I
SCREW UP.

...

YOU
HAVE A
CRUSH
ON
OTANI,
DON'T
YOU?

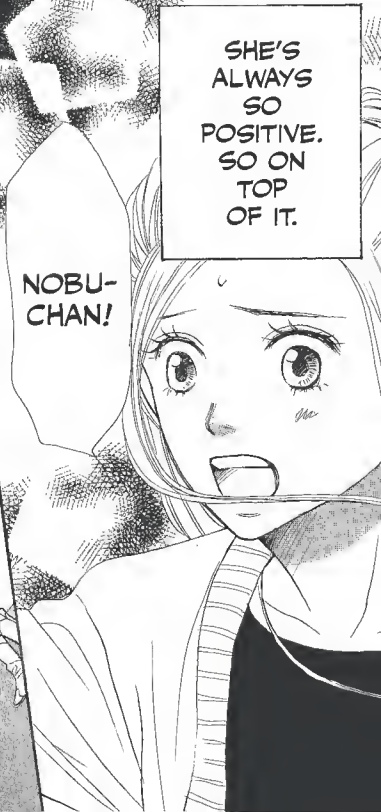
IT'LL
BE
FINE!
JUST
GO
FOR IT,
RISA!

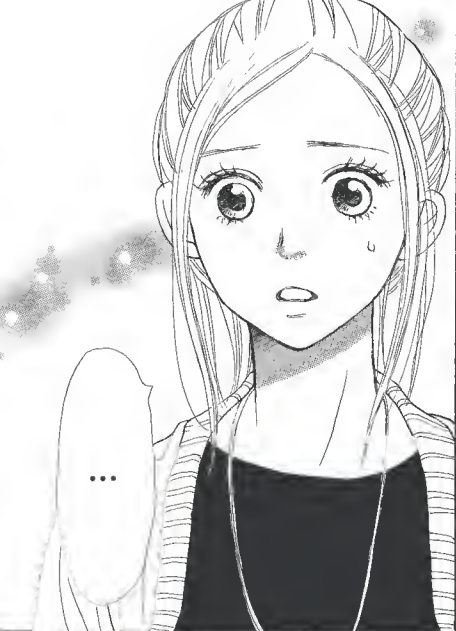


WAIT...

NOBU-
CHAN!

SHE'S
ALWAYS
SO
POSITIVE.
SO ON
TOP
OF IT.





...



YOU
THINK I'M
MAKING
THE
WRONG
DECISION?

...RISA...

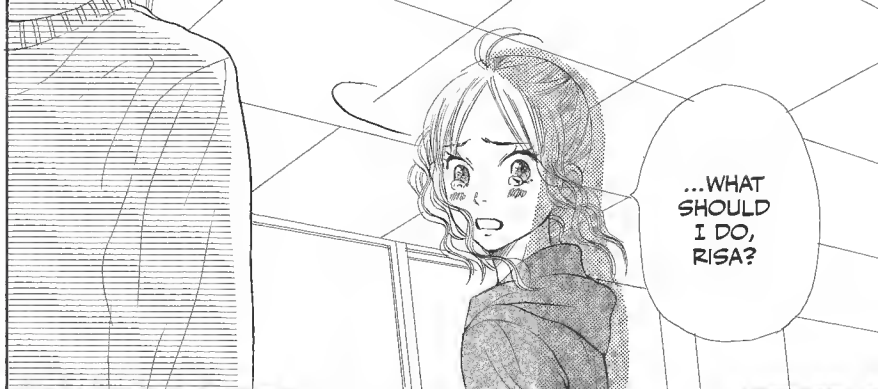


I'M SO
LUCKY TO
HAVE A
WONDERFUL
GRAND-
DAUGHTER
LIKE NOBU-
CHAN...



YOU THINK
I SHOULD
STAY HERE
WITH BABY
AFTER
ALL?

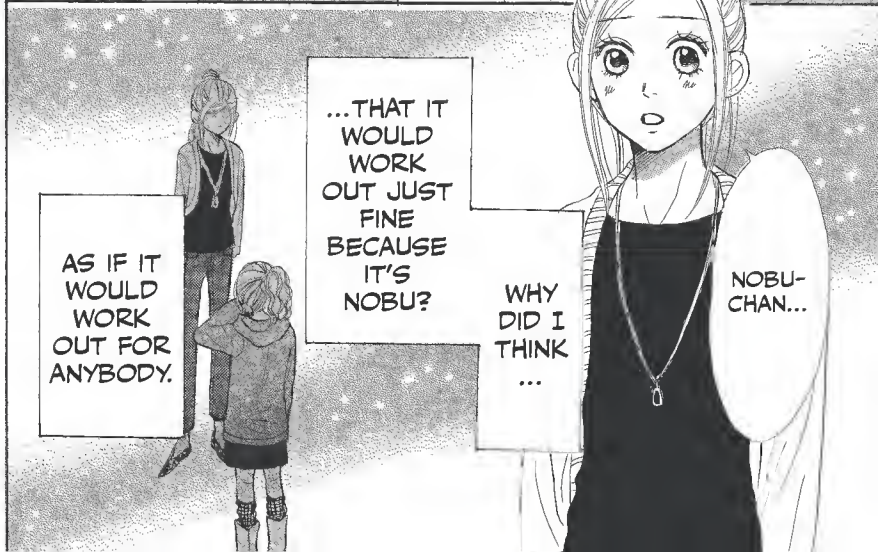
NOBU-
CHAN...



...WHAT
SHOULD
I DO,
RISA?



I JUST
DON'T
KNOW
WHAT I
SHOULD
DO.



AS IF IT
WOULD
WORK
OUT FOR
ANYBODY.

...THAT IT
WOULD
WORK
OUT JUST
FINE
BECAUSE
IT'S
NOBU?

WHY
DID I
THINK
...

NOBU-
CHAN...

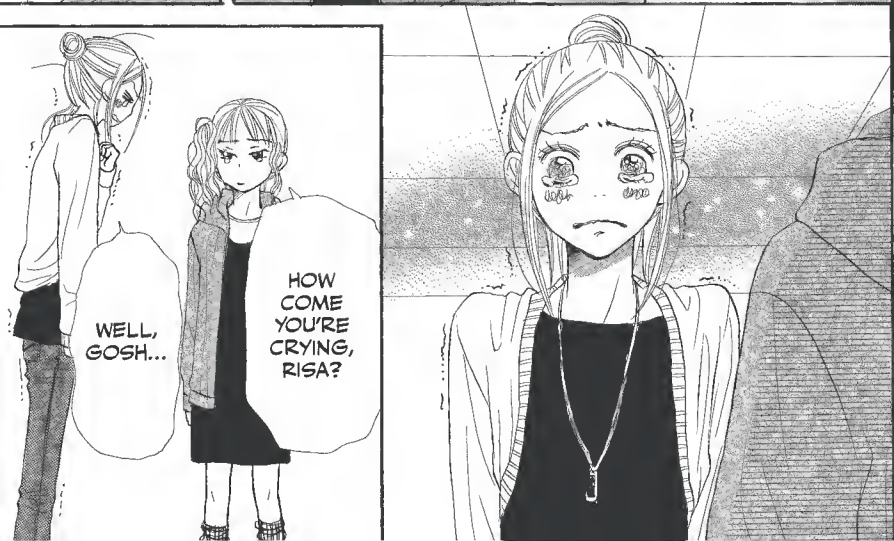


SHE MUST'VE
BEEN REALLY,
REALLY TORN.
BUT AFTER
THINKING
REALLY LONG
AND HARD
ABOUT IT...

WHO'D
WANT TO
LEAVE THEIR
BOYFRIEND
BEHIND AND
GO FAR
AWAY?

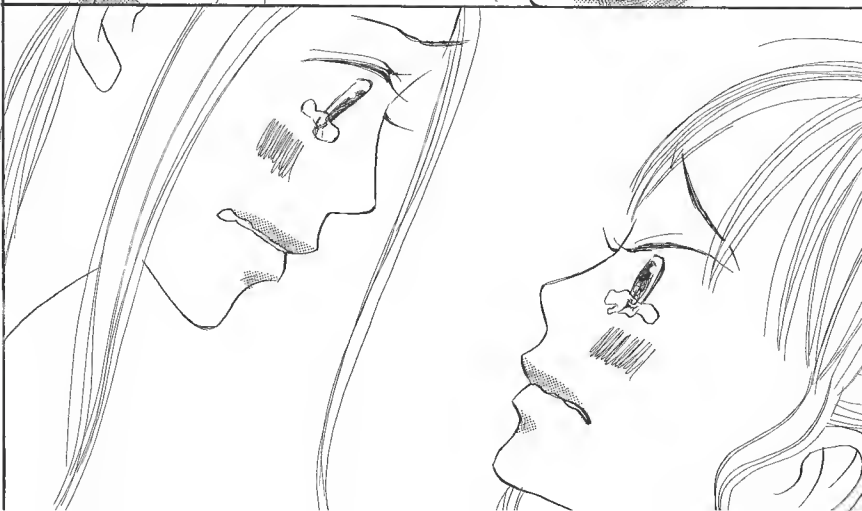
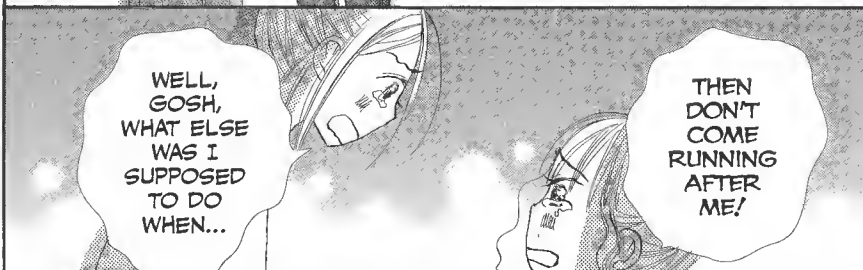
...SHE
DECIDED
TO GO.

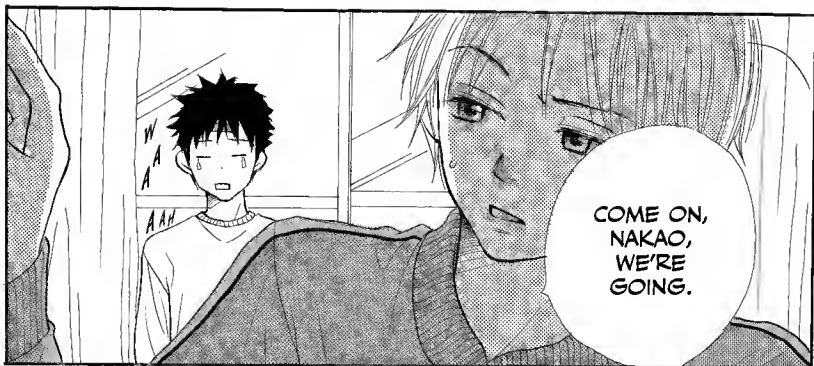
NOBODY,
OBVIOUSLY.
LIKE, DUH.



WELL,
GOSH...

HOW
COME
YOU'RE
CRYING,
RISA?



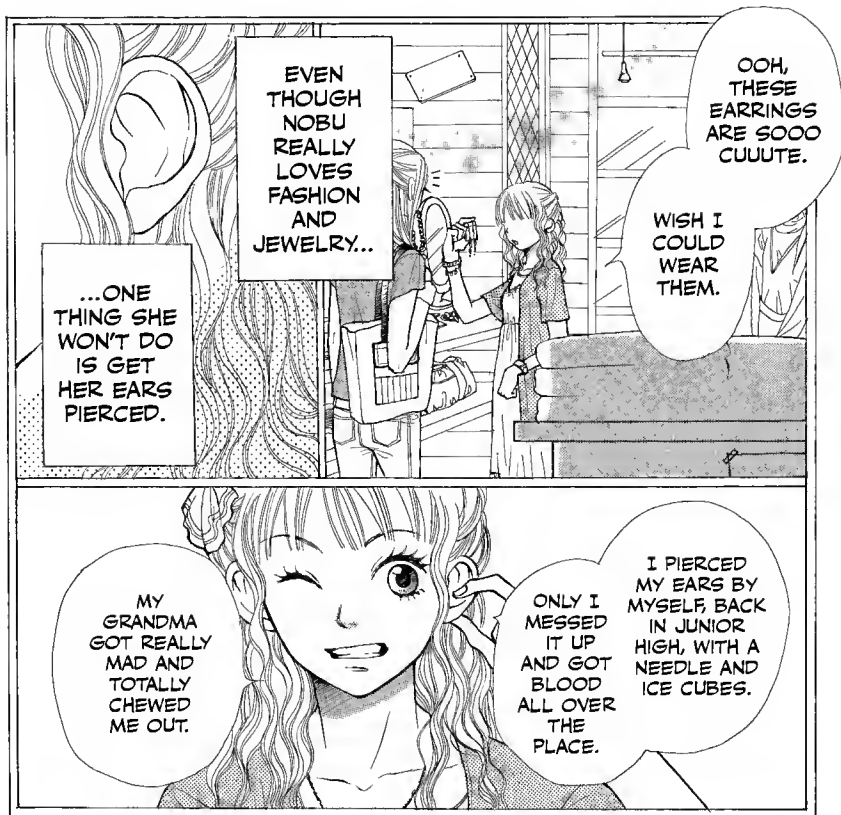


...TO BE
SEPARATED
FROM
NOBU-CHAN
EITHER.

I
DON'T
WANT...

ME
EEEEEE-
EITHER-
RRRR...

I DON'T
GET WHAT
YOU'RE
TALKING
ABOOOO-
OUT...

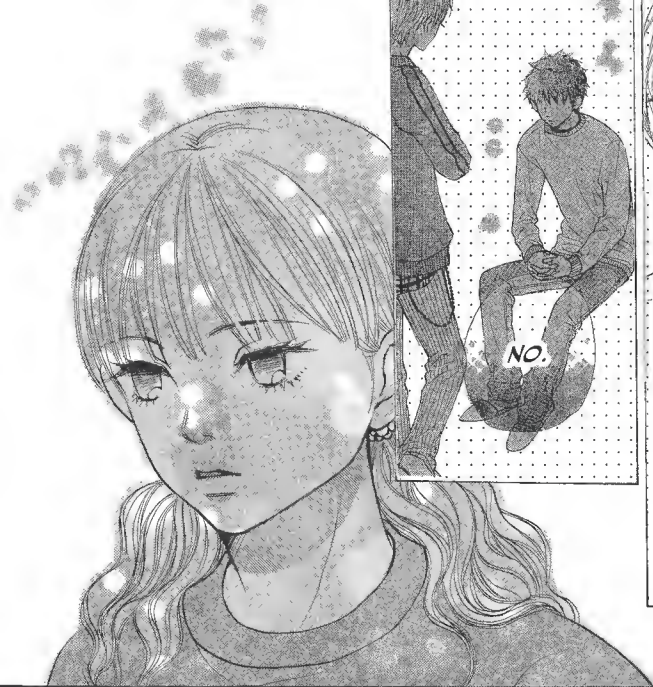


CHAPTER 43

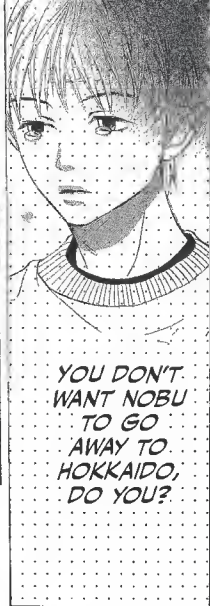








NO.



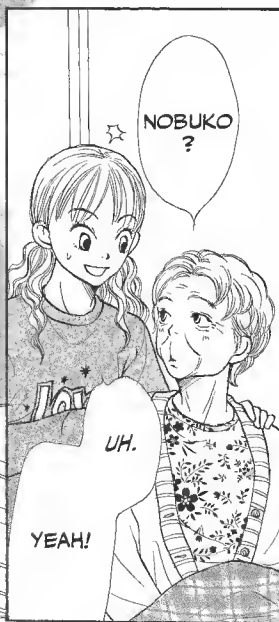
YOU DON'T
WANT NOBU
TO GO
AWAY TO
HOKKAIDO,
DO YOU?



YOU'RE
RIGHT,
I WILL...

OH MY
GOSH.

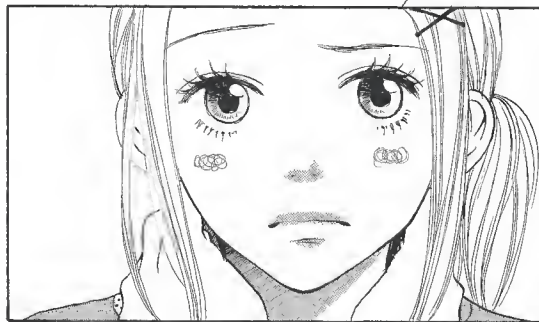
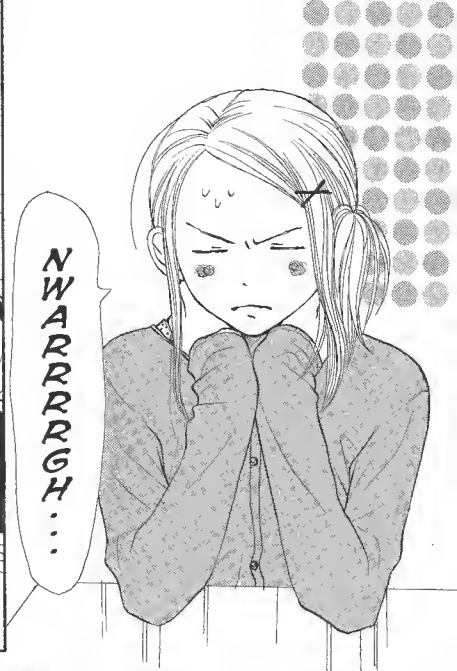
WONDER
WHAT
NOBU'S
GOING
TO DO?



NOBUKO
?

UH.

YEAH!





But the leftovers always get eaten by somebody, okay? We don't throw food away, okay?

So anyway, that's what it's like at my house. Like, I just had some yakisoba. Super-greasy yakisoba. A huge mound of them. Like, excuse me, but this is not a competitive eating event!

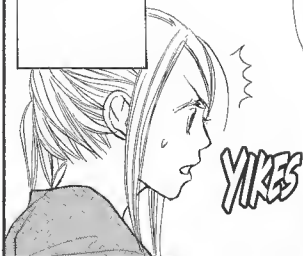
Lately I've been eating a lot of Japanese cuisine. And really enjoying it. Even sashimi, which I used to hate so much, is a big favorite now. I guess your tastes change as you grow older.

Waaah... My mom just brought me some cake. I just had yakisoba, remember? You saw me eat it, right? I'm sorry, but there is no way I can have cake right now.



In that case, allow me to eat it for you.

HE'S RIGHT.



WHO KNOWS WHAT HE'S GONNA FALL OFF OF NEXT? HE COULD GET REALLY HURT...

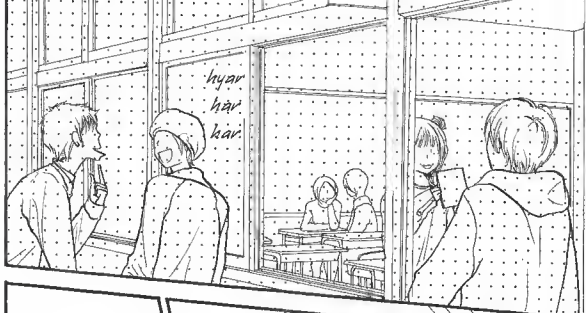
I MEAN, THE DUDE'S A TOTAL BASKET CASE.



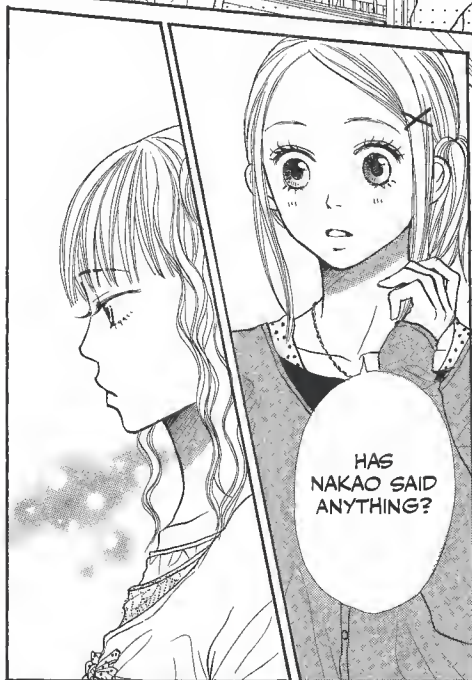
I WAS SO WORRIED ABOUT NOBU, BUT ACTUALLY, NAKAO'S IN WAY WORSE SHAPE...

HI YOU GUYS...





OH MY
GOD...



HAS
NAKAO SAID
ANYTHING?



OH
GOSH...

WHAT
SHOULD
I DOOO?



IN A
WEEK.

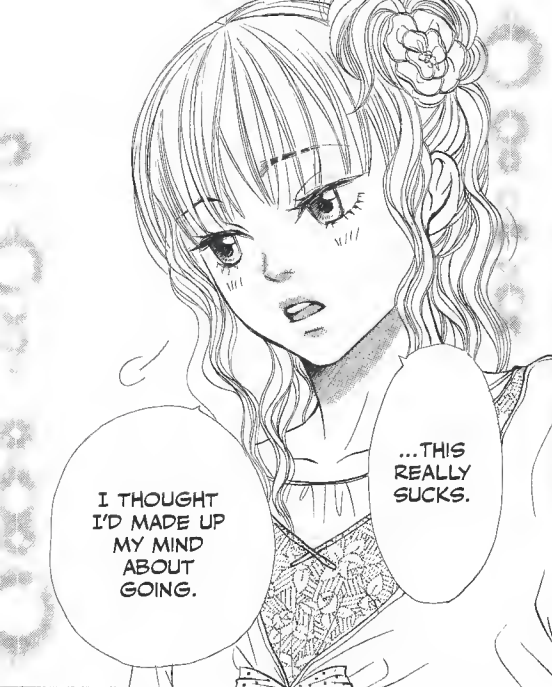
AND WHEN
IS YOUR
ENTRANCE
EXAM?



UH-
HUH...

HE'S SAYING
STUFF LIKE,
"DON'T
WORRY ABOUT
ME" AND
"SORRY FOR
BEING SO
LAME."

HE'S
REALLY
BUMMED
THAT I
HEARD
HIM.



I THOUGHT
I'D MADE UP
MY MIND
ABOUT
GOING.

...THIS
REALLY
SUCKS.



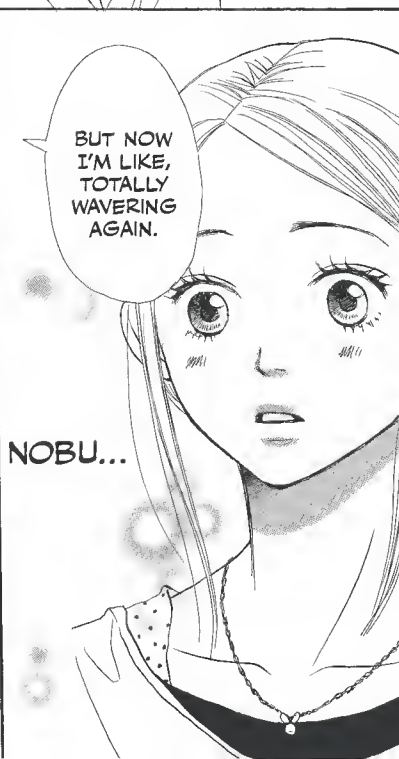
I
KNOW.

IN A
WEEK
...?
THAT'S,
LIKE,
**TOMOR-
ROW!**



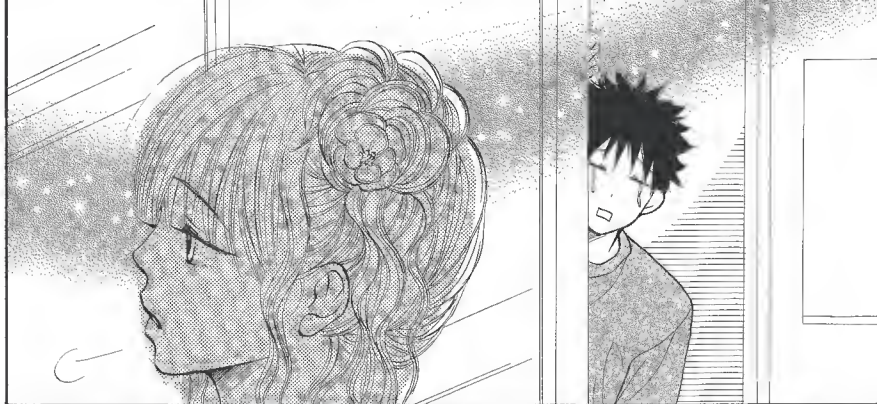
WELL,
GOSH, WHO
WOULDN'T
WAVER AFTER
HEARING
SOMETHING
LIKE THAT?

...YEAH
...



BUT NOW
I'M LIKE,
TOTALLY
WAVERING
AGAIN.

NOBU...



I WISH
THERE WAS
SOMETHING
I COULD DO
TO HELP
HER, BUT...



...YEAH...



SO SHE
HEARD
YOU, TOO
BAD. YOU
CAN'T DO
ANYTHING
ABOUT
IT NOW,
RIGHT?

YOU JUST
GOTTA LET
HER REACH
HER OWN
DECISION
AND BE
READY FOR
WHATEVER
THAT IS.

Bzzzz

Bzzzz

...ÔTANI'S
RIGHT.
IT'S HER
LIFE...

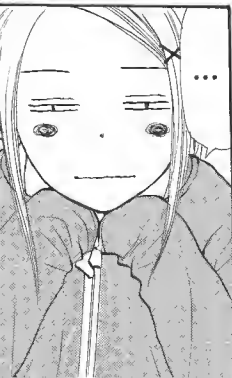
OKAY, SO I
SHOULDN'T
BUTT IN, BUT
I WISH NAKAO
WOULD SAY
SOMETHING.
LIKE, TELL HER
NOT TO GO.

hee
hee
hee

KA-
TOK

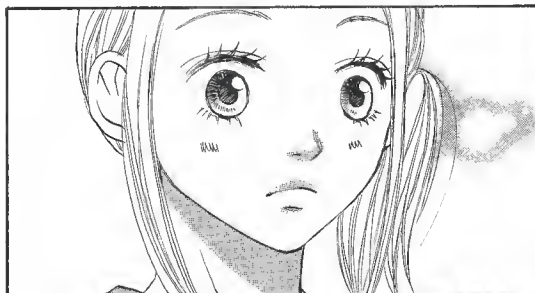
CUZ IF HE
TOLD HER
TO STAY,
I BET SHE
WOULD. IT'S
LIKE, HE'D
MAKE HER
MIND UP
FOR HER.

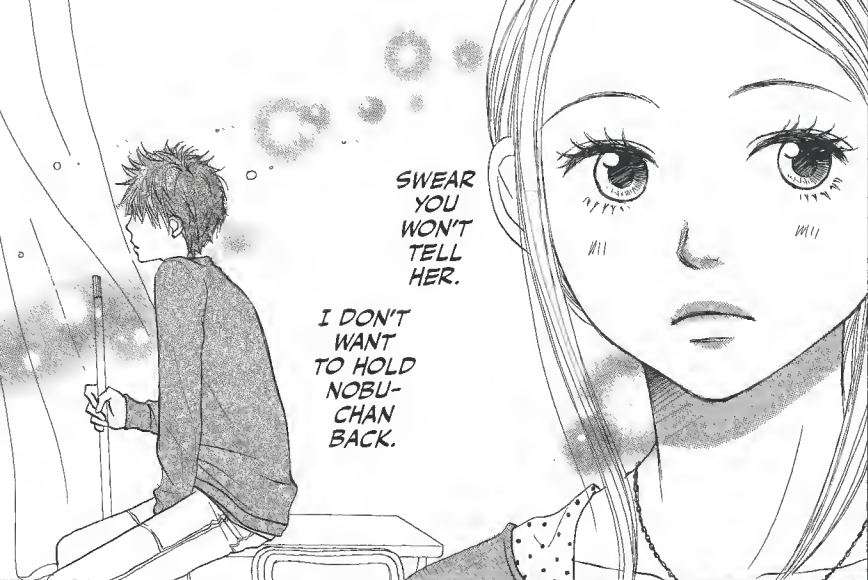
HUH?



TELL
HER
WHAT
TO
DO?

THAT
GUY?





SWEAR
YOU
WON'T
TELL
HER.

I DON'T
WANT
TO HOLD
NOBU-
CHAN
BACK.



HELPED
YOU
OUT?

SO THERE'S
NOTHING I
CAN DO TO
PAY NOBU
BACK FOR ALL
THE TIMES
SHE HELPED
ME OUT.



LIKE,
WHEN?

OH,
NAKAO...



WHAT'RE
YOU
GUYS
DOING?



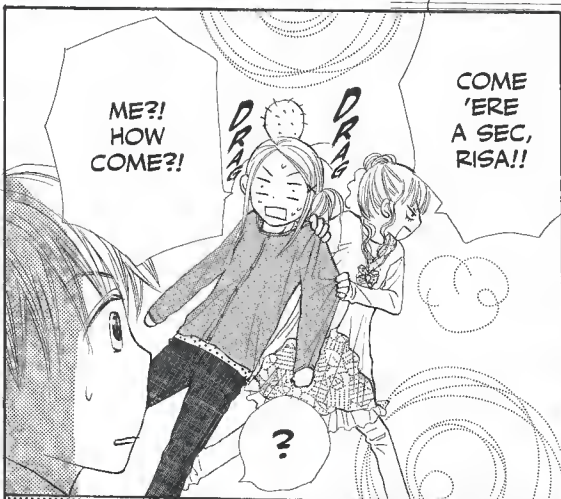
NOT
TRUE! I
SUDDENLY
REMEM-
BERED
ALL KINDS
OF PAST
AGGRAVA-
TIONS!!

SHE JUST
SUDDENLY
STARTED
YELLING
AT ME FOR
NOTHING!!



YOU HAVE NO IDEA,
DO YOU, YOU BIG
LUNKHEAD, OF HOW
MUCH NOBU HELPS ME
OUT WHEN I'M BEING
DRIVEN NUTS BY YOU
AND YOUR STUPIDITY?!

OWWWWWW!!
WHAT THE
HECK'RE
YOU
TALKING
ABOUT?!

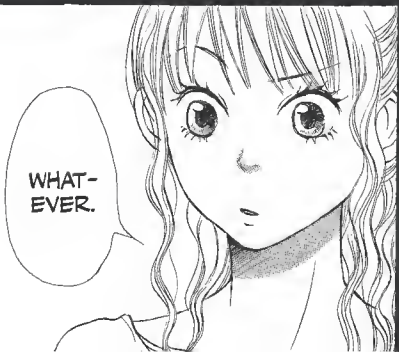


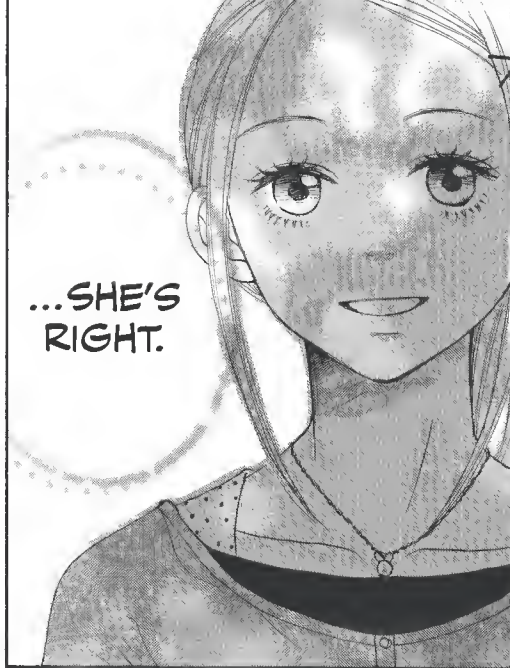
ME?!
HOW
COME?!

COME
'ERE
A SEC,
RISA!!



THWOK





...SHE'S
RIGHT.



I FEAR
FOR
YOUR
FUTURE,
GIRL.

I SWEAR,
I REALLY
DON'T KNOW
WHAT'S
GONNA
HAPPEN TO
YOU WHEN
I'M GONE.



ÔTANI?

UH-OH.
HEY,
NAKAO...

WHADDAYA
MEAN,
LEAVE YOU
ALONE?!

FINE,
WHATEVER,
JUST
LEAVE ME
ALONE!!

SORRY
ABOUT
THAT
EARLIER.
♡

I DON'T
WANT
NOBU TO
GO AWAY
EITHER.

SO
PLEASE,
NAKAO.
COME
ON.

YOU
HAVE TO
DO IT.

Bzzzz

See
ya,
bye!

BUT IF HER
OWN BOY-
FRIEND'S
BEING
SO CON-
SIDERATE
THAT HE
DOESN'T
TELL HER
TO STAY...

...THEN
I SURE
CAN'T
ASK
HER TO.



WHO YA
CALLIN'
"BABY,"
HUH?

TELL
HER
NOT
TO
GO.

LAY
DOWN
THE LAW
AND
KEEP
HER
HERE.



I'M
SAYING,
DON'T CALL
ME "BABY,"
AWRIGHT?

I'M A
MAN,
TOOTSIE.
DON'T FORGET
IT.

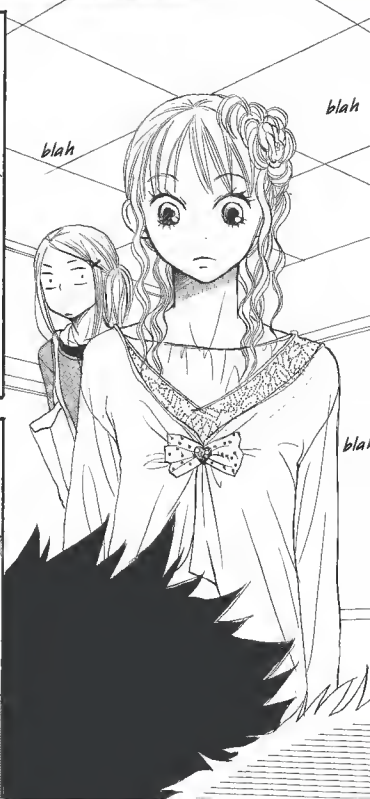
...WHAT'S
UP WITH
THOSE
SUN-
GLASSES,
BABY?



**MY
LORD
AND
MASTER!!**

BABY'S
FLIPPING
OUT.

WH-
WHAT'S
GOING
ON?



blah

blah

bla



YOU
WANNA
GO
HOME,
GO
HOME.
LATER!



OKAY,
WHATEVER.
NOW LET'S
GO HOME,
HON.



LIKE,
HUH?

...IS
WHAT
YOU
CALL ME,
GOT
THAT?

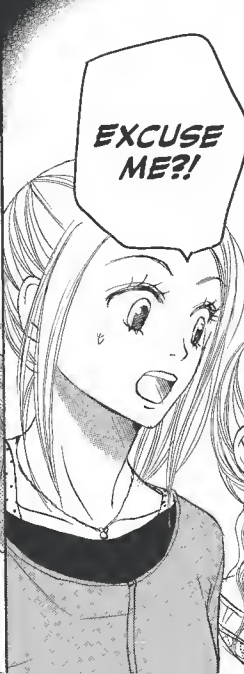
WHAT
THE
HECK?



WELL,
I NEVER
TOLD
YOU ALL
BEFORE,
BUT...

YOU ARE
BUGGIN'
OUT
BIG-TIME,
DUDE.

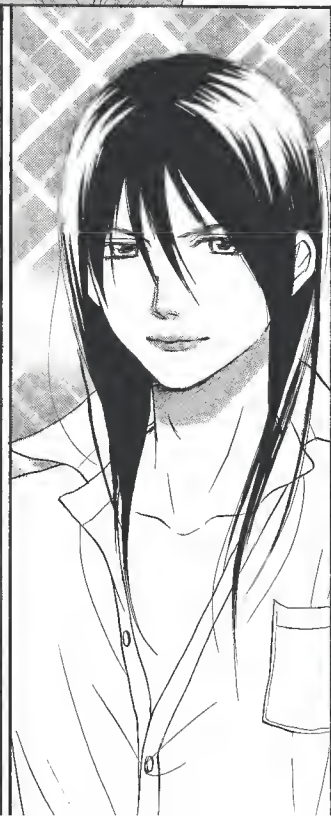
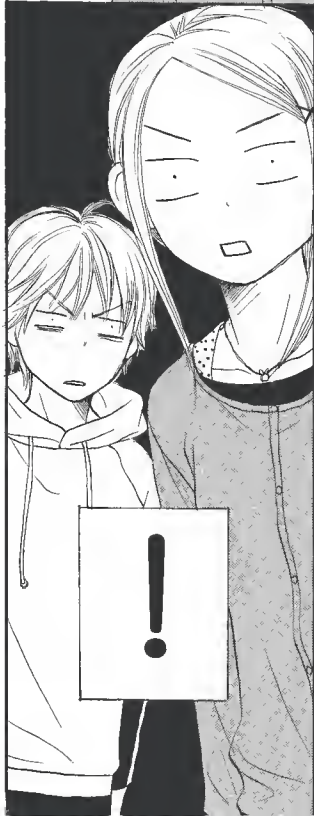
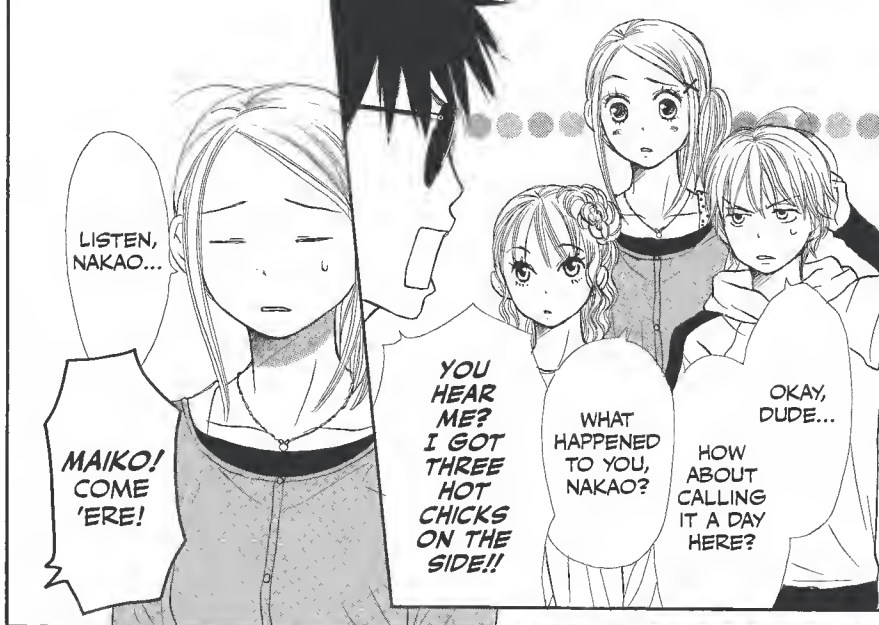
I
GOT ME
THREE
HOT
CHICKS
ON THE
SIDE,
SEE?



**EXCUSE
ME?!**



I'M
GOING
OUT WITH
MY OTHER
LADIES.







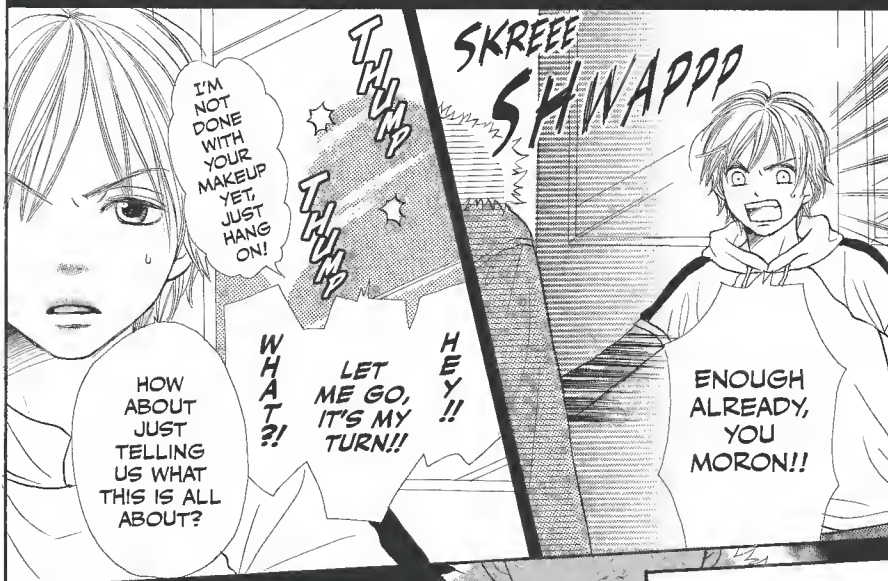
AND
FINALLY!!

I'D LIKE
YOU TO
MEET
HARUKO!!

SORRY.

Su...
suzu...
suzu...

Suzuki...?



I'M
NOT
DONE
WITH
YOUR
MAKEUP
YET,
JUST
HANG
ON!

HOW
ABOUT
JUST
TELLING
US WHAT
THIS IS ALL
ABOUT?

THUD
THUD
WHAT?!

LET
ME GO,
IT'S MY
TURN!!

HEY!!

SKREEE
SHWAPPP

ENOUGH
ALREADY,
YOU
MORON!!

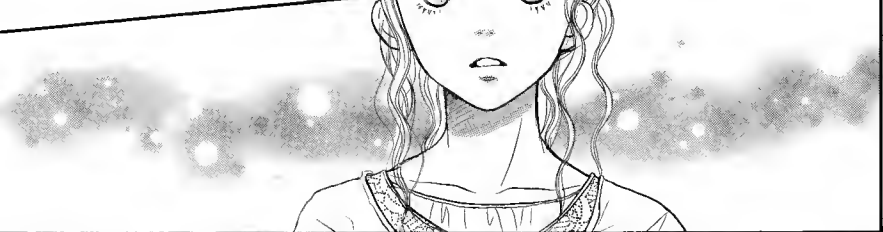


WHAT
IS
THIS?

BABY...



FORGET ABOUT ME, NOBU. I'M JUST A LYING, TWO-TIMING SCUMBAG.



VA-MOOSE?
?

VA-MOOSH?
?

PROBABLY.

VA-MOOSH?
?

SO YOU JUST VAMOOSH UP TO HOKKAIDO AND STAY OUT OF MY WAY.

I'M GONNA BE GETTING IT ON EVERY DAY WITH MY SEXY LITTLE HAREM HERE.



THEN GET
OUTTA
HERE.
GO ON
HOME.

...

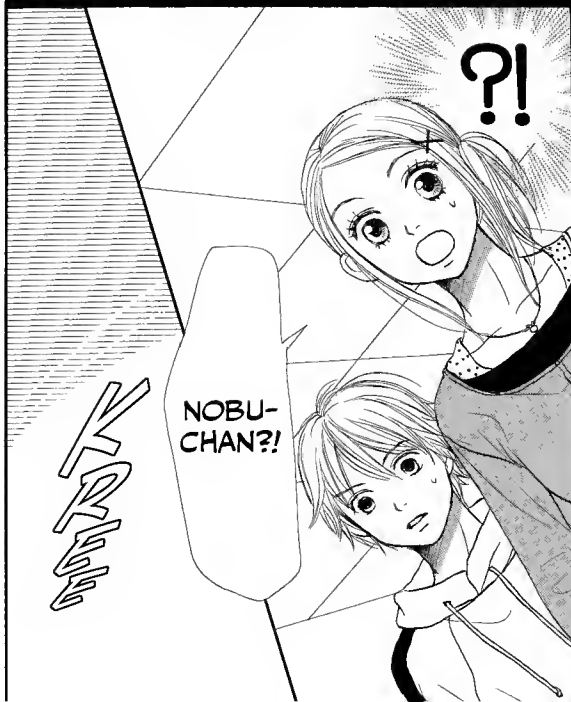


...I
GUESS.

MORE
OR LESS,
ANYWAY.



YOU
GOT
THAT?



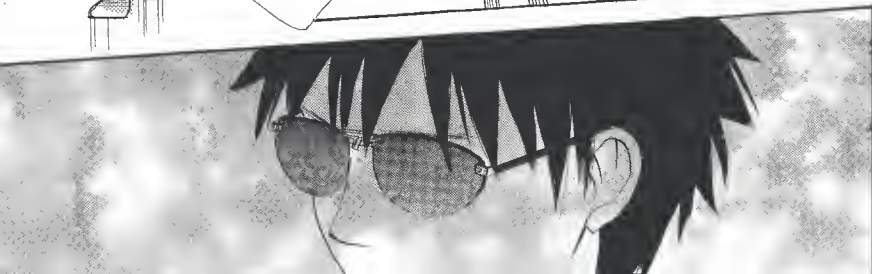
?!

NOBU-
CHAN?!

KAKAKAKA



...OKAY.





HEY! YOU
THERE! I'M
TALKING
TO YOU,
MISTER
VAMOOSH!!



WHAT?

I WAS
TRYING
TO MAKE
HER
TOTALLY
SICK OF
ME...

...SO
SHE
COULD
JUST
FORGET
ABOUT
ME...



...

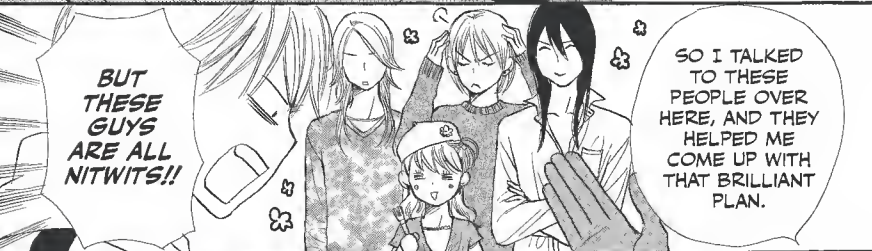
I WAS
TRYING
TO GET
NOBU
TO HATE
ME.



WHAT
THE HECK
WAS THAT
LAME
LITTLE
SKIT ALL
ABOUT?!



...AND GO
OFF TO
HOKKAIDO
LIKE SHE
DECIDED
WITHOUT
FEELING
TORN UP
ABOUT IT.



BUT
THESE
GUYS
ARE ALL
NITWITS!!

SO I TALKED
TO THESE
PEOPLE OVER
HERE, AND THEY
HELPED ME
COME UP WITH
THAT BRILLIANT
PLAN.



YOU
CAN
SAY
THAT
AGAIN
!!



CUZ
YOU'D
JUST
GET
MAD
AT ME.

JEEZ!
WHY
DIDN'T
YOU
TALK
TO ME
ABOUT
IT?!



...THEN
DON'T PULL
A STUPID
STUNT LIKE
THAT IN
THE FIRST
PLACE!

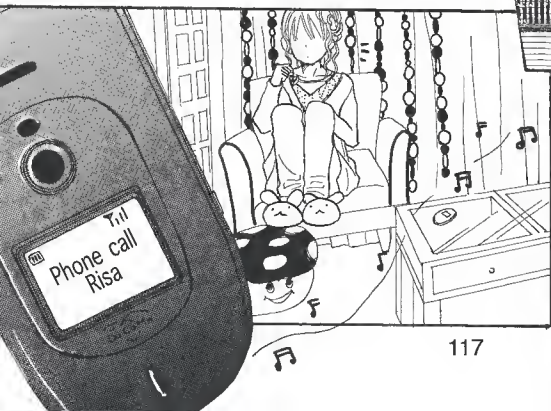
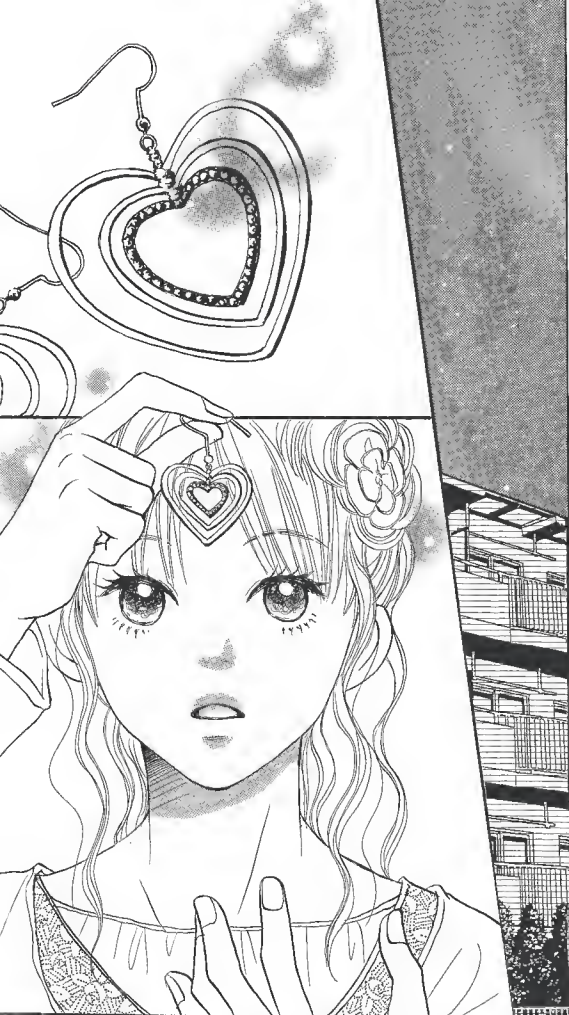
LOOK,
IF YOU'RE
GONNA
SIT THERE
SNIVELING
AND
CRYING
AFTER-
WARDS...

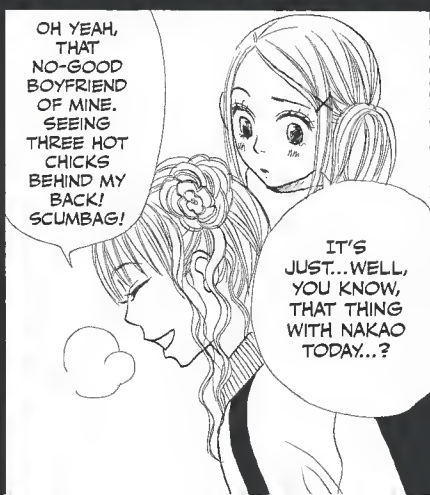
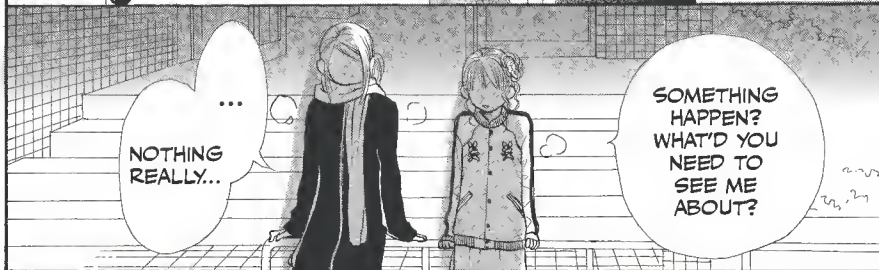
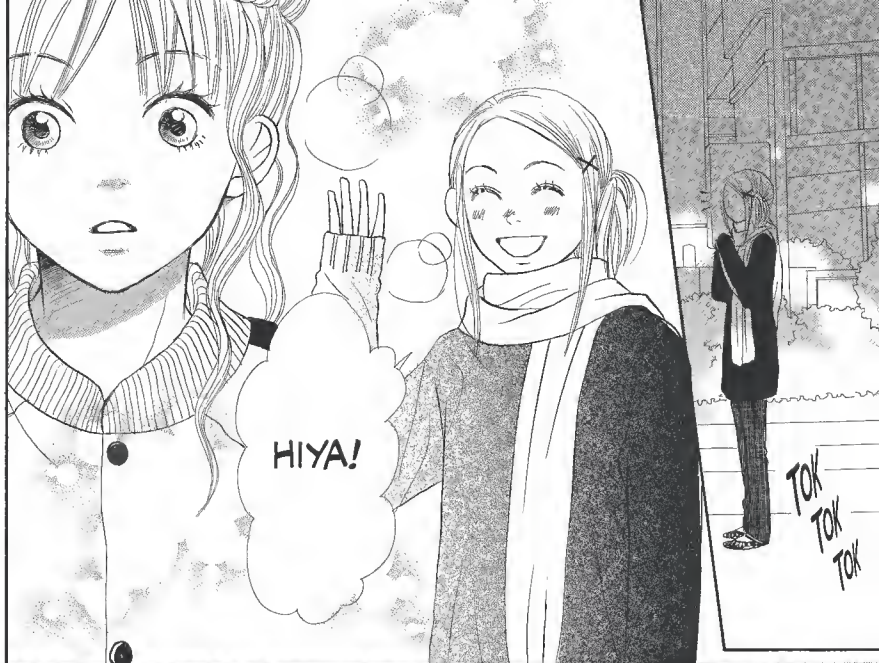


ÔTANI...



YOU DON'T
WANT HER
TO GO, JUST
BE HONEST
WITH HER
AND TELL
HER THAT!







A black and white manga panel showing the backs of two characters. The character on the left has their hair in a bun and is wearing a light-colored sweater. The character on the right has their hair in a bun and is wearing a dark jacket with a light-colored scarf. They are standing and looking away from the viewer.

I'M
GONNA
GO TO
HOKKAIDO
AFTER
ALL.

I
MADE
UP MY
MIND.



A close-up of a character's face, shown in profile. They have long, straight hair and are looking down with a thoughtful or sad expression. The background is dark and textured.

I
MEAN,
GOSH

...
HE
DOES
SOME-
THING
LIKE
THAT
FOR
ME...

IT'S
LIKE,
WHAT
OTHER
CHOICE
DO I
HAVE?

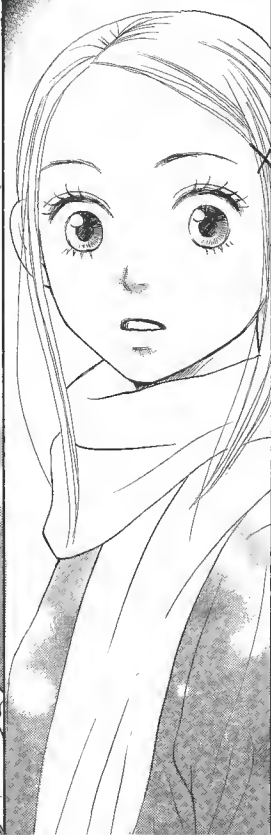


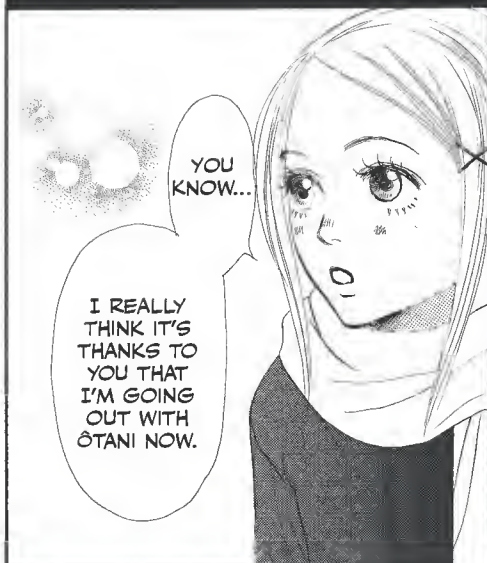
A character with long, wavy hair is shown from the chest up, looking down and slightly to the side. They are wearing a dark jacket and a light-colored scarf. The background is a dark, textured crowd.

THIS
MIGHT
SOUND
WEIRD,
BUT...

...NOBU-
CHAN...

...THAT
DUMB
SHOW HE
PUT ON
TODAY
IS WHAT
DID IT
FOR ME.





YOU
KNOW...

I REALLY
THINK IT'S
THANKS TO
YOU THAT
I'M GOING
OUT WITH
ÔTANI NOW.



HEY,
UM...

HEY,
NOBU-
CHAN?

HMM?



HELP!
POLICE!
I'D
LIKE TO
REPORT A
LUNATIC
OVER
HERE!

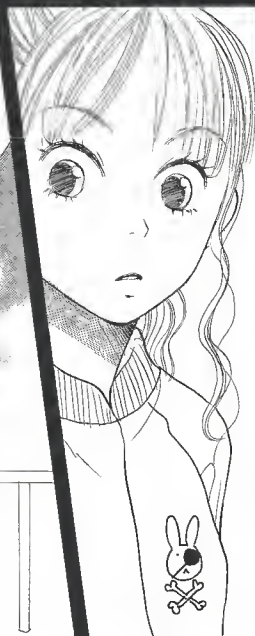
NOBU!!
STOP IT!
WILL YOU
LISTEN
TO ME?!



IT'S ONLY
BECAUSE
YOU WERE
THERE THAT I
MANAGED TO
KEEP GOING
AFTER HE
TURNED ME
DOWN THAT
FIRST TIME.

WHAT'S
UP WITH
YOU ALL
OF A
SUDDEN?

IF I DIDN'T
HAVE YOU
AROUND, I'D
STILL BE
RUNNING
AROUND IN
CIRCLES
PROBABLY.





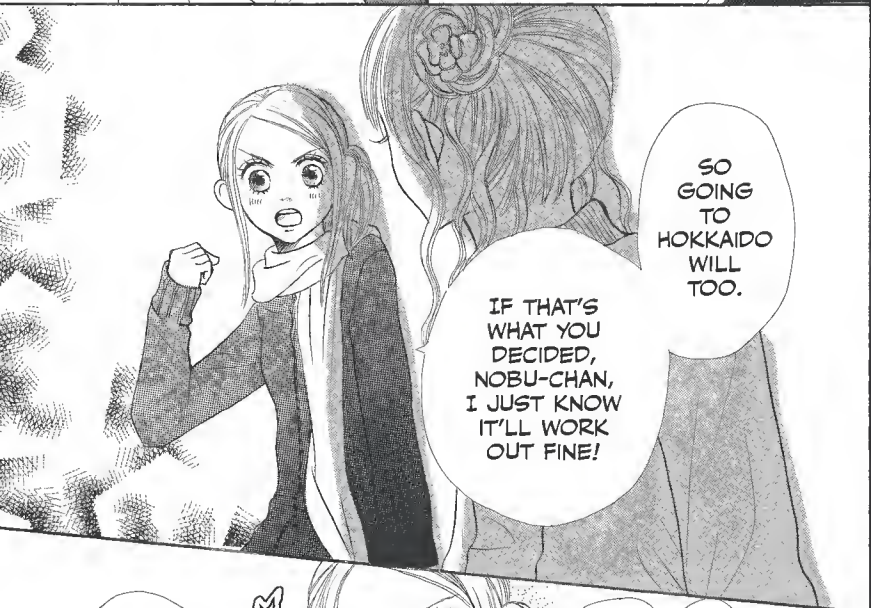
I KNOW
FROM
PERSONAL
EXPERIENCE
THAT
WHATEVER
YOU DECIDE
WILL ALWAYS
WORK OUT!



YOU'RE
ALWAYS
RIGHT!
WHATEVER
YOU
DECIDE IS
ALWAYS
RIGHT!

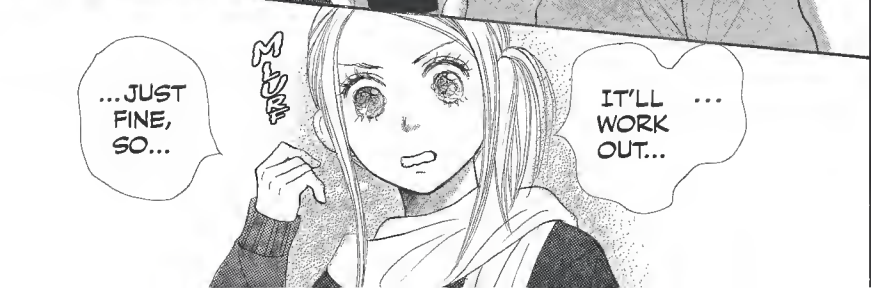
THAT I
TRUST YOUR
JUDGMENT
A HUNDRED
PERCENT, AND
AS FAR AS I'M
CONCERNED...

WHAT
I'M
TRYING
TO SAY
IS...



SO
GOING
TO
HOKKAIDO
WILL
TOO.

IF THAT'S
WHAT YOU
DECIDED,
NOBU-CHAN,
I JUST KNOW
IT'LL WORK
OUT FINE!



...JUST
FINE,
SO...

MUR

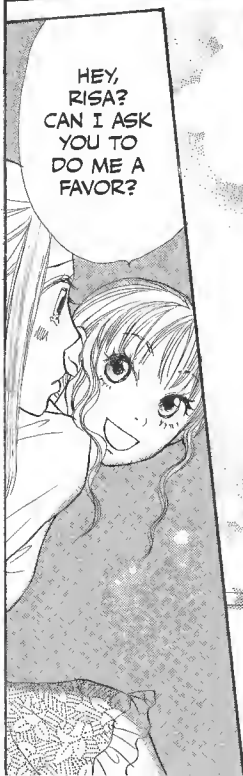
IT'LL ...
WORK
OUT...



THANK
YOU,
RISA.

DON'T
WORRY
...

...ABOUT
...



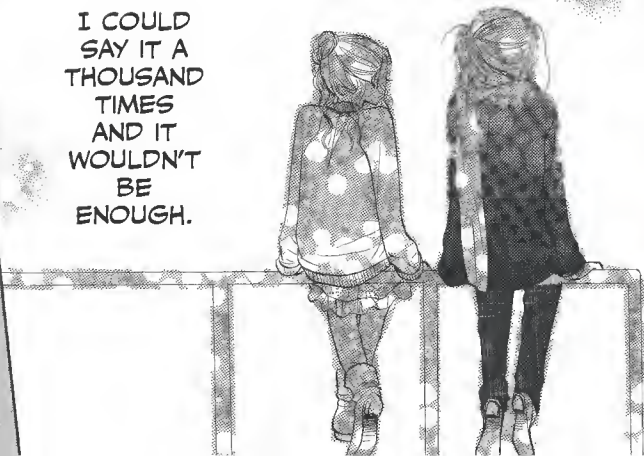
HEY,
RISA?
CAN I ASK
YOU TO
DO ME A
FAVOR?

I'M THE
ONE WHO
OUGHT
TO BE
SAYING
THANK
YOU.

HEY.
THAT
WAS
PERFECT.

...SORRY
I CAN'T
THINK OF
ANYTHING
BETTER
TO SAY...

I COULD
SAY IT A
THOUSAND
TIMES
AND IT
WOULDN'T
BE
ENOUGH.





YOU
GUYYS
...

blah

blah

JUST
LIKE NOBU
ALWAYS
GAVE ME
A PUSH
WHEN I
NEEDED
IT...



suit

hic

suit

B-BUT...
TH-THEN
YOU'LL GO
AWAY AG-
GAIN...

I'M
COMING
RIGHT BACK
AFTER I
TAKE THE
EXAM,
OKAY?

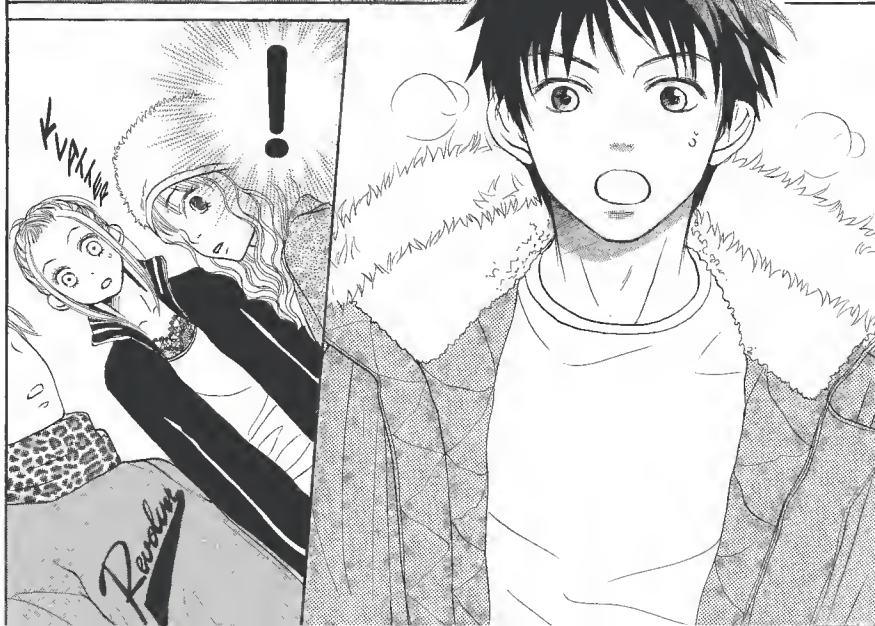
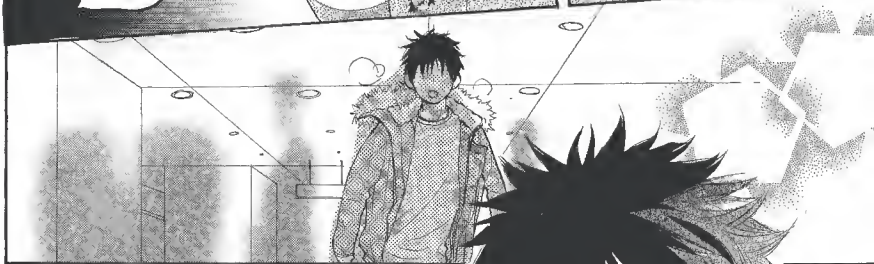
I'M
GOING
TO DO
THE
SAME
FOR
HER.

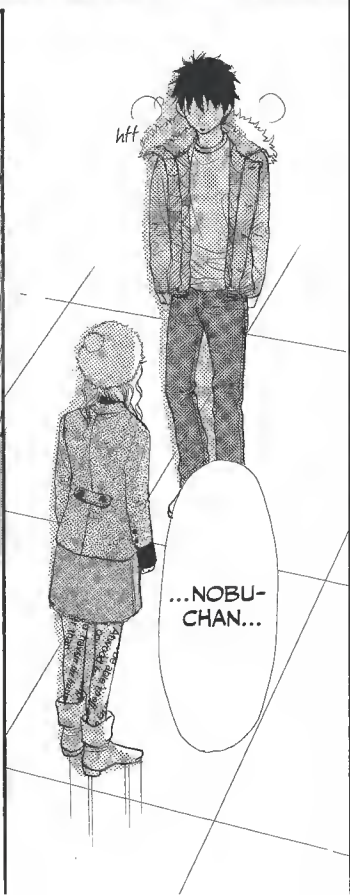
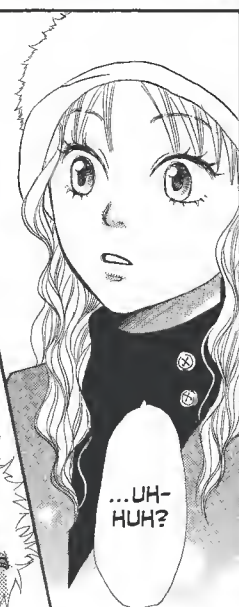
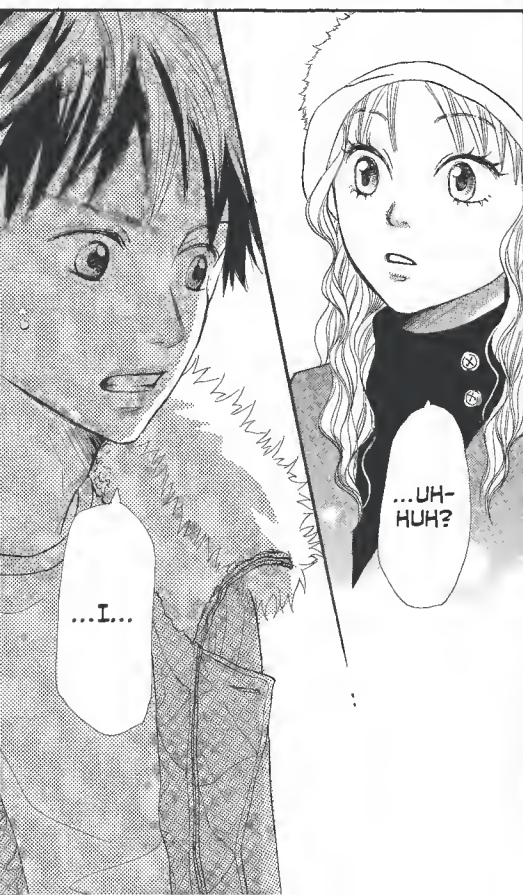
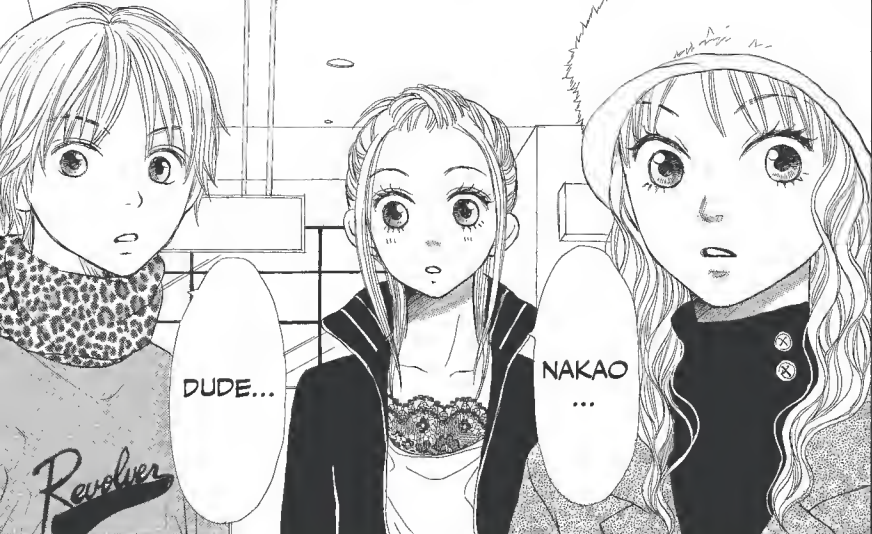


WHERE'S
NAKAO...?
HE ISN'T
GONNA
SHOW?

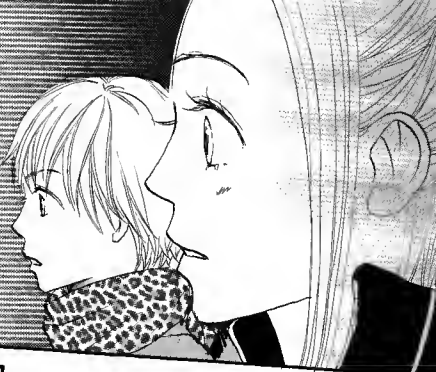
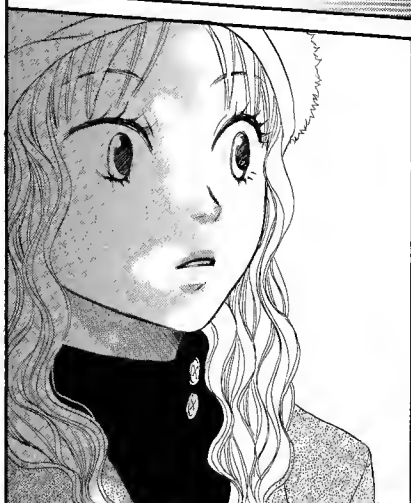
THAT'S
STILL
A WAYS
AHEAD!

関西空港駅
Kansai Airport Station





I...



...

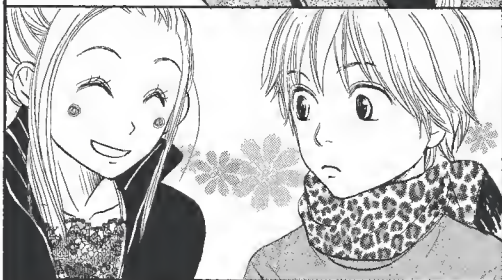


...I
HOPE
YOU DO
REALLY
WELL
ON THAT
EXAM.


GOOD
LUCK,
NOBU-
CHAN!















I LOVE
YOU SO
MUCH,
NOBU-
CHAN.

MORE
THAN
ANYBODY
ELSE
IN THE
WHOLE
WORLD.



I LOVE
YOU TOO,
BABY.

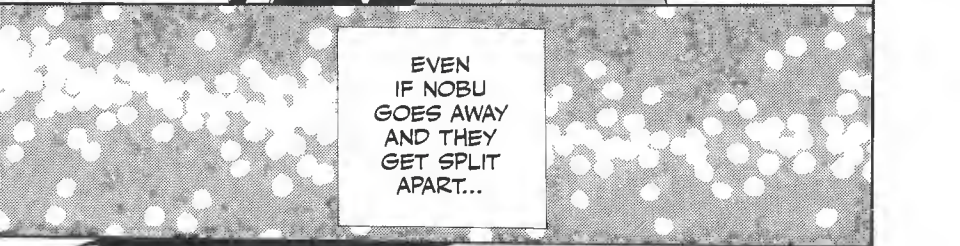





SO
WHAT?
ALL WE
CARE
ABOUT
IS IF
THEY'RE
HAPPY,
RIGHT?

HE CAN'T
TELL HER
NOT TO GO,
BUT HE CAN
SAY STUFF
LIKE *THAT*
IN FRONT OF
ALL THESE
PEOPLE?

WHAT'S
WITH
THAT
DUDE,
MAN?

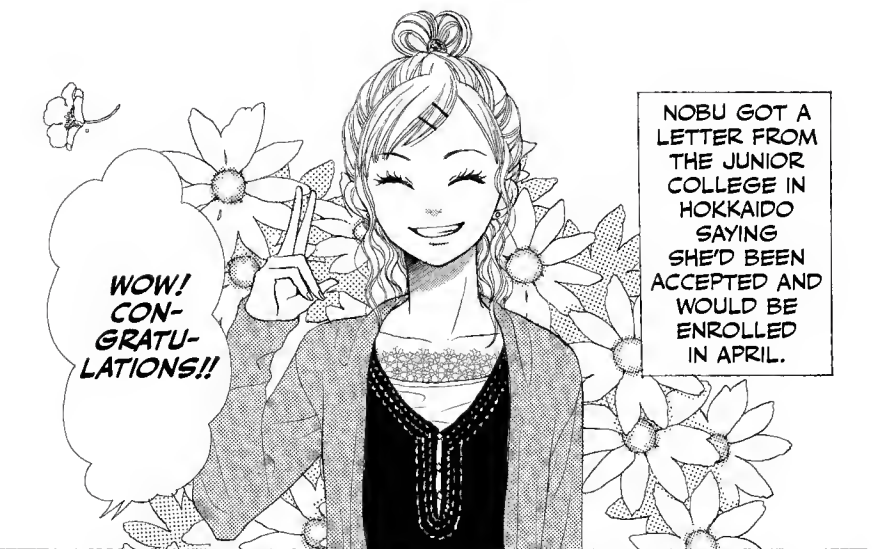


EVEN
IF NOBU
GOES AWAY
AND THEY
GET SPLIT
APART...



...I REALLY
HOPE THOSE
TWO STAY
MADLY IN
LOVE WITH
EACH OTHER,
JUST LIKE
THEY ARE
NOW.





CHAPTER 44



CONGRATU-
LATIONS,
NOBU-CHAN.

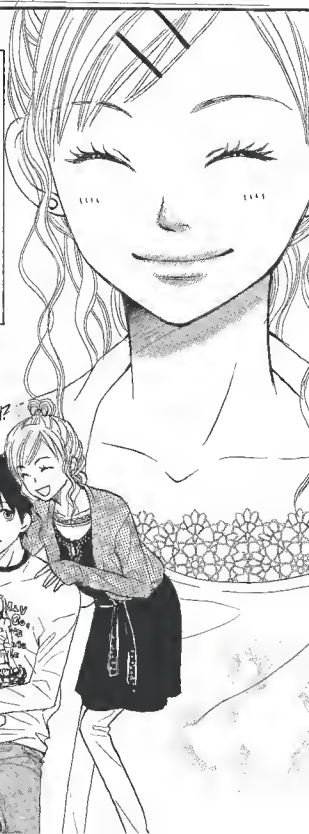


SHE AND
NAKAO
SEEM TO
BE EVEN
MORE LOVEY-
DOVEY WITH
EACH OTHER
THAN BEFORE.

WHICH IS
REALLY
GREAT.

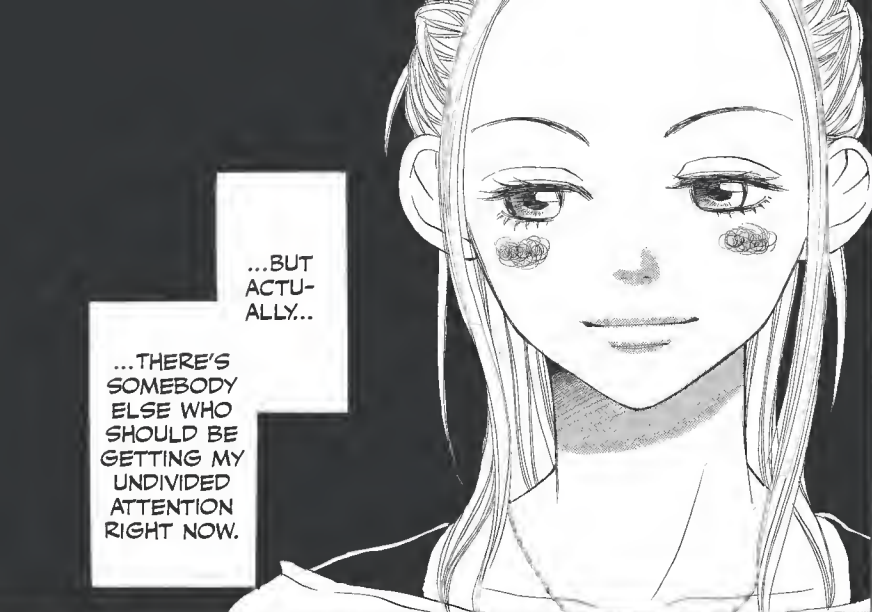
Wanna
come
over
after
school?

Yeah,
for
sure.



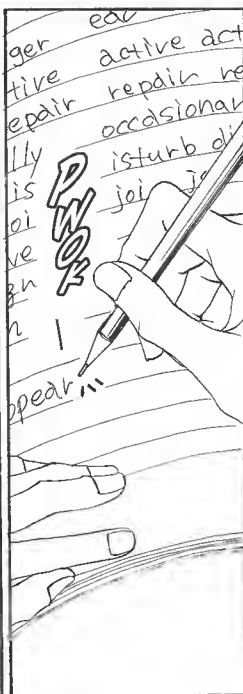
...BUT
ACTU-
ALLY...

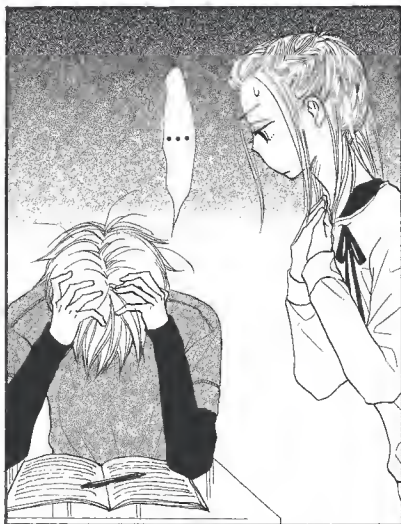
...THERE'S
SOMEBODY
ELSE WHO
SHOULD BE
GETTING MY
UNDIVIDED
ATTENTION
RIGHT NOW.



MY
PENCIL
LEAD
BROKE
OFF!!
I CAN'T
WRITE
!!

IT
BROKE
!!







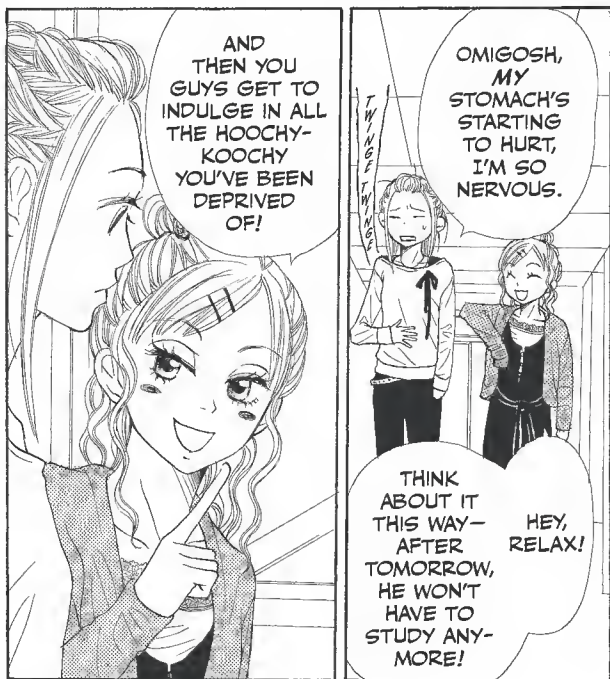
So anyway, this'll be my last sidebar for this volume.

I hope I get to meet you again in vol. 12. Volume 12! Twelve volumes! I'll do my best to make sure you don't think of them as being in the way. All I want is to make this a fun little manga that'll bring a smile to your face. I imagine many of you face various irritations at school and at work. I wish you'd think of Love☆Com at times like that, and laugh.

My ambition is not to create a masterpiece manga for the ages. If you enjoy my manga when you read them, if I can give you even just one moment of laughter or pleasure, then that's enough for me.

And now, time for one last song before the end of the program. It's called, "I just had yakisoba." Hope you like it!

♪ Dinnertime already?!
Sweet-and-sour pork?!
♪ But I just ate yakisoba!
You saw me eat it!
Sweet-and-sour pork,
my god!! Please,
Mom, please... ♪





WELL.

THAT
WOULD
ONLY BE
IF HE
PASSES,
ANYWAY.

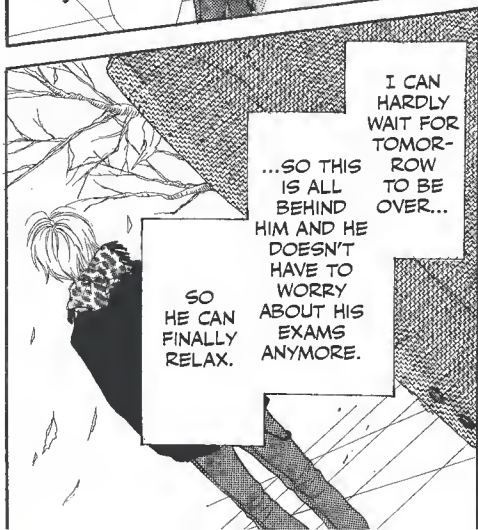
US?
HOOCHY-
KOOCHY?
HOKEY AND
KOOKY,
MAYBE...



SO HEY,
GOOD
LUCK
TOMOR-
ROW!

AND
THERE'S
NOTHING
I CAN DO
FOR HIM
ANYMORE,
NOT AT
THIS POINT.

THANKS.



I CAN
HARDLY
WAIT FOR
TOMOR-
ROW
TO BE
OVER...

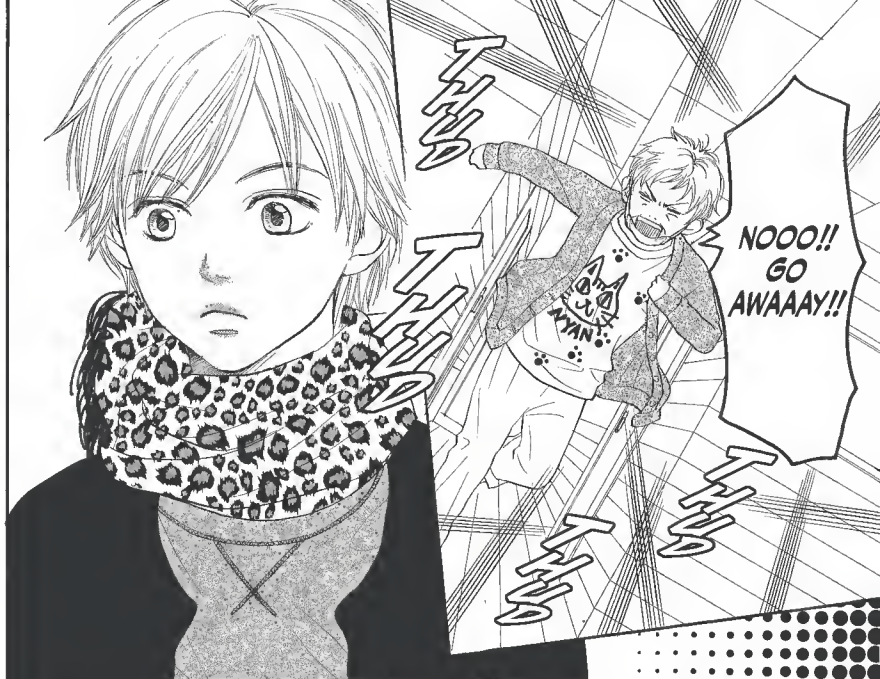
...SO THIS
IS ALL
BEHIND
HIM AND HE
DOESN'T
HAVE TO
WORRY
ABOUT HIS
EXAMS
ANYMORE.

SO
HE CAN
FINALLY
RELAX.



...STILL,
SHE'S
RIGHT.





NOOO!!
GO
AWAAAY!!





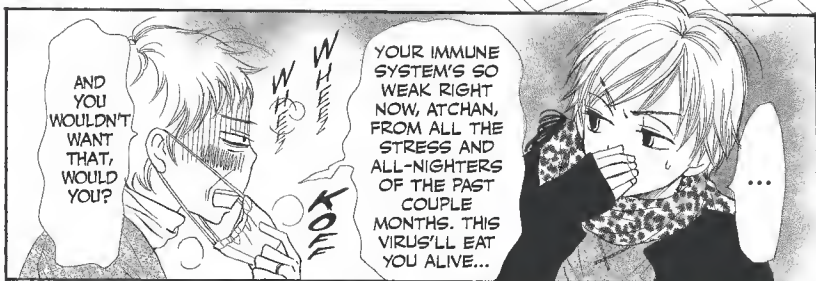


WELL,
I'D BE
AN EVEN
WORSE
FAILURE IF
I GAVE IT
TO YOU,
SO...



ARE YOU
KIDDING
ME?! WHERE
THE HECK
ELSE AM I
SUPPOSED
TO GO?!

I CAN'T
LET YOU
IN THE
HOUSE
TONIGHT...



AND
YOU
WOULDN'T
WANT
THAT,
WOULD
YOU?

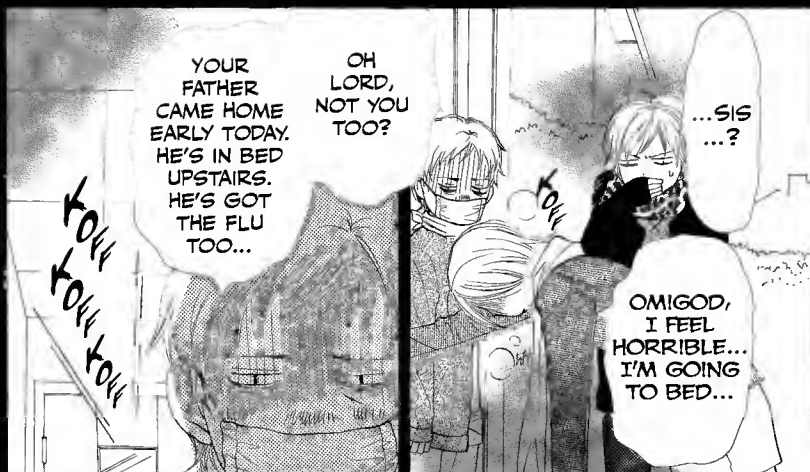
YOUR IMMUNE
SYSTEM'S SO
WEAK RIGHT
NOW, ATCHAN,
FROM ALL THE
STRESS AND
ALL-NIGHTERS
OF THE PAST
COUPLE
MONTHS. THIS
VIRUS'LL EAT
YOU ALIVE...

...



I'M
HOME...

BUT...



YOUR
FATHER
CAME HOME
EARLY TODAY.
HE'S IN BED
UPSTAIRS.
HE'S GOT
THE FLU
TOO...

OH
LORD,
NOT YOU
TOO?

...SIS
...?

OMIGOD,
I FEEL
HORRIBLE...
I'M GOING
TO BED...

KOKU
KOKU
KOKU

KOKU



NO
WAY!
MOM!!
JEEZ!
WILL
YOU...

GET A
HEALTHY
FRIEND
TO PUT
YOU UP
TONIGHT.

WHA...
HUH?!

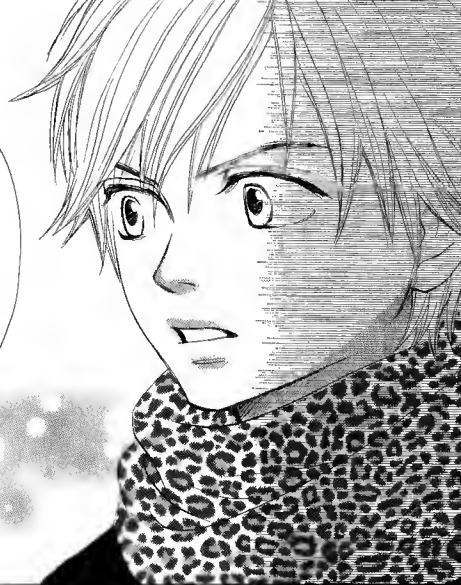
SO, THAT
BEING THE
CASE,
ATCHAN...

LEAVE
THIS
PESTI-
LENTIAL
HOUSE
AT ONCE.
HERE.

I'M
REALLY
SORRY,
SWEETIE
...
RIGHT
BEFORE
YOUR
BIG DAY
TOO...

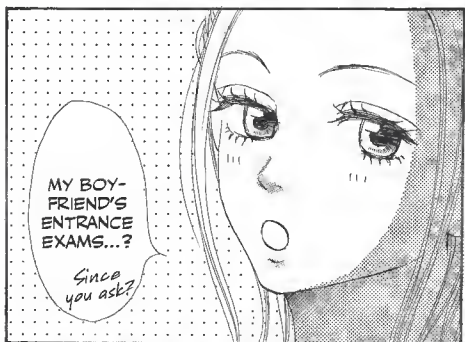
BUT I
JUST CAN'T
RISK IT
TONIGHT.
GOOD
LUCK,
ATCHAN...

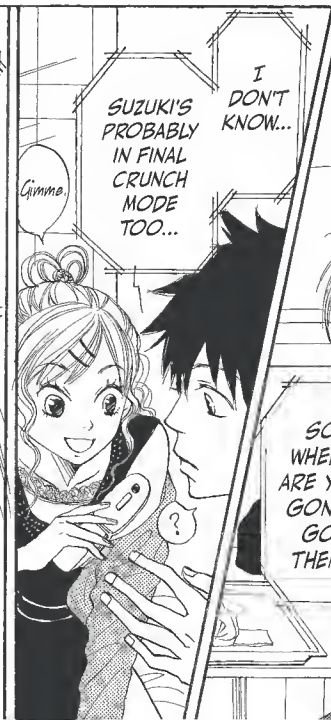
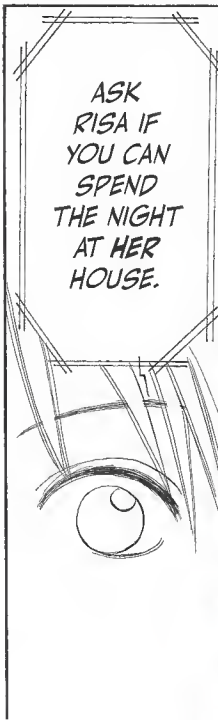
IF YOU
DIDN'T
HAVE THE
EXAM
TOMORROW,
I'D LET
YOU IN.



KLIK









I BETCHA
RIGA
WOULD BE
STOKED
TO HAVE
YOU OVER!

WHAT'S A
GIRLFRIEND
FOR, IF NOT
TO BE
THERE FOR
YOU WHEN
YOU'RE IN
TROUBLE?

WHAT?!



LIKE, I
DON'T
THINK
THIS
IS THE
TIME FOR...

SPEAK-
ING OF
THE
TIME...

I ONLY
HAVE MY
EXAMS
TOMORROW.

...EXCUSE
ME,
BUT...



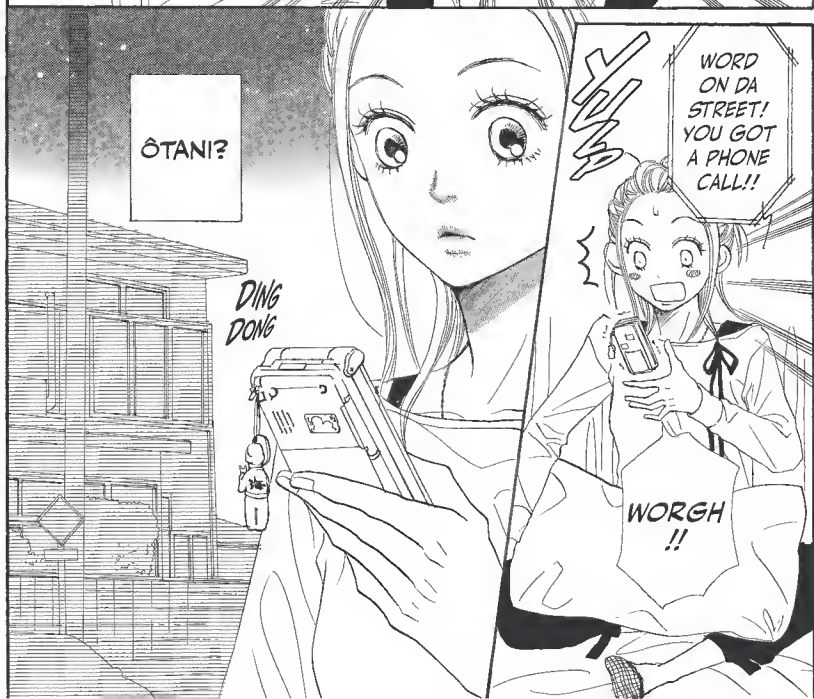
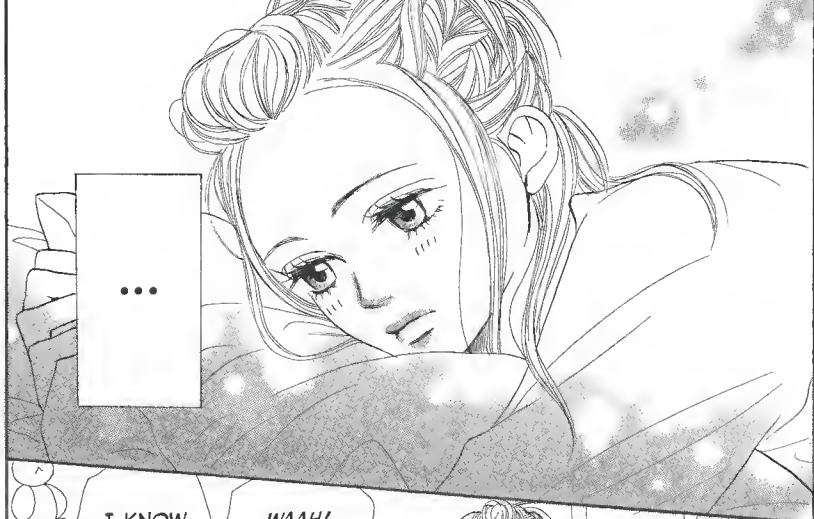
I AM NOT
SHOWING UP
AT HER DOOR
BEGGING TO
BE LET IN!
THAT IS
WAY TOO
PATHETIC!!

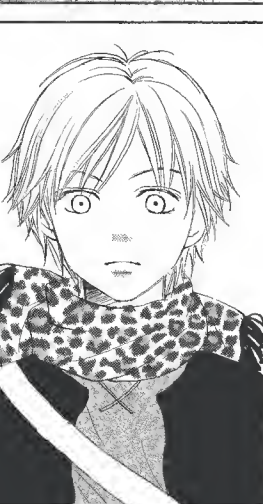
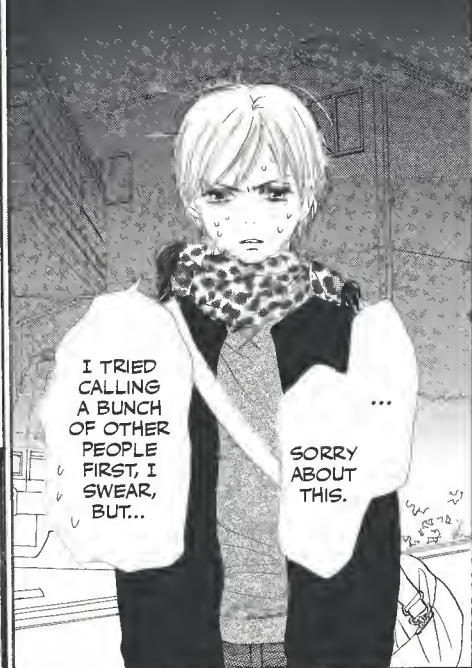


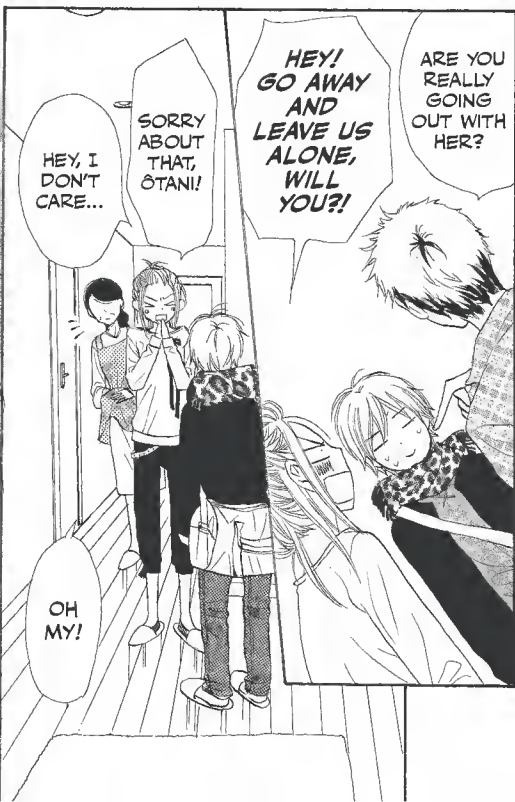
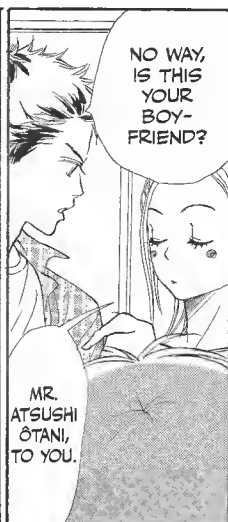
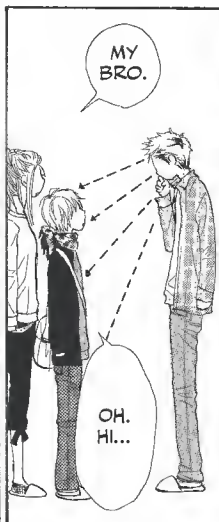
AS YOU
SIT THERE
ARGUING
WITH ME,
THE MINUTES
ARE TICKING
AWAY, OKAY?



OH COME
ON. USE
THIS GREAT
OPPORTUNITY
TO SPEND
THE NIGHT WITH
YOUR GIRL-
FRIEND!
OTANI!





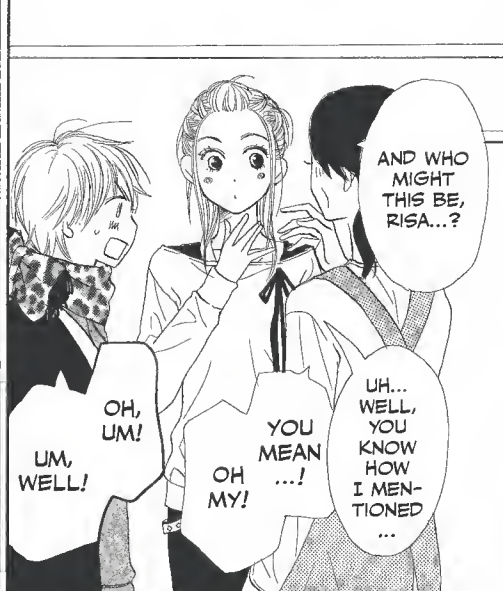




CAN YOU COME HERE, DEAR ?!

GOOD-NESS GRACIOUS, I HAVE NOTHING IN THE HOUSE...

NICE TO MEET YOU, UM, I'M...



AND WHO MIGHT THIS BE, RISA...?

OH, UM!
UM, WELL!

YOU MEAN ...!
OH MY!

UH... WELL, YOU KNOW HOW I MENTIONED ...



MOM, YOU DON'T HAVE TO CALL DAD RIGHT THIS MINUTE...

"D-d-dear"... meaning your dad?!

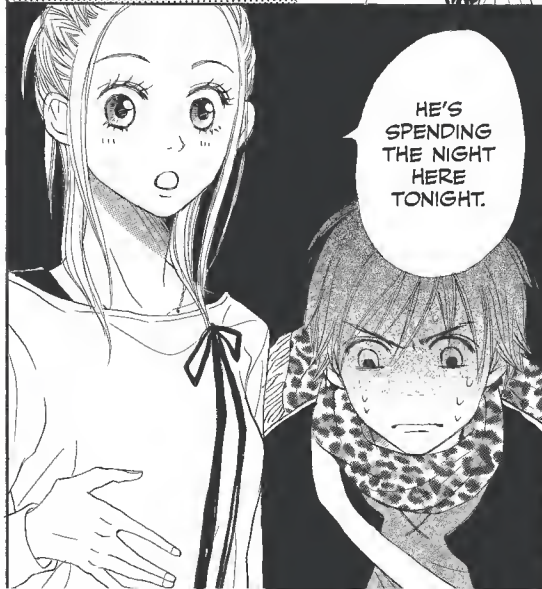
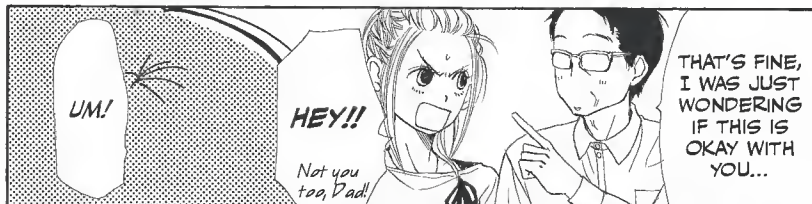
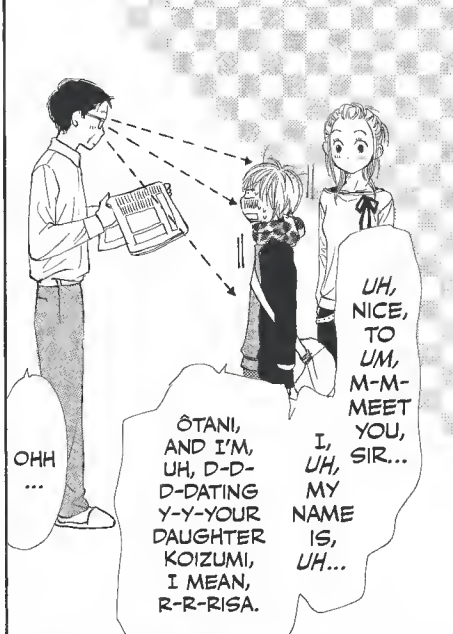
WHAAT ?!



URGH.



...HMM?





BUT...

I'LL
EXPLAIN
LATER,
OKAY?!

N-NO,
IT'S NOT
WHAT THAT
SOUNDS
LIKE! I
GOT
KICKED
OUT...



HE'S
SPENDING
THE NIGHT
HERE?!

SPENDING
THE...



WILL
YOU
JUST
EASE
OFF?!
I TOLD
YOU, I'LL
EXPLAIN
EVERY-
THING
LATER!!



I JUST
NEED A
PLACE TO
CRASH,
REALLY!!



WHAT
HAPPENED?!
YOU HAVE
SUCH AN
IMPORTANT
DAY
TOMORROW!

EXACTLY!
THAT'S THE
WHOLE
PROBLEM,
YOU SEE,
BECAUSE
...
...

DON'T
YOU
HAVE
YOUR
EXAM
TOMOR-
ROW...?

WELL,
THE
THING
IS...
...

KI-OH

...SORRY,
ÔTANI...

SORRY
ABOUT
THAT.
YOU'RE
REALLY
TIRED,
AREN'T
YOU?

SLUMP

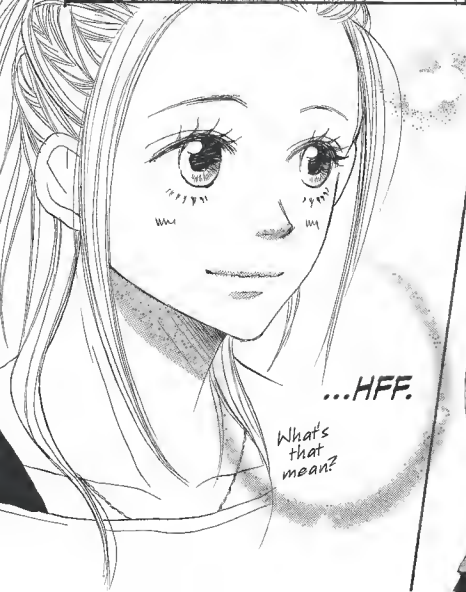
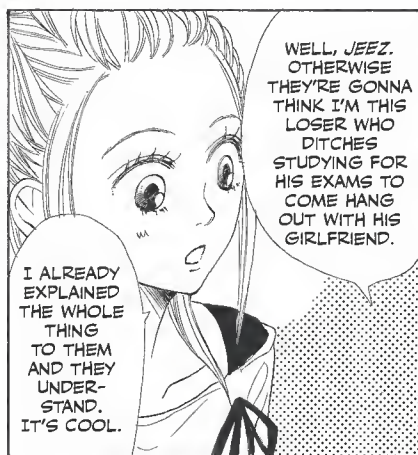
I MEAN, WHAT
THE HECK AM
I DOING HERE?!

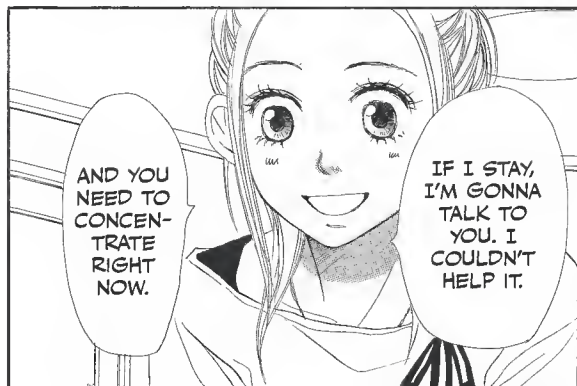
IT'S THE
NIGHT BEFORE
MY ENTRANCE
EXAMS AND
I'M...

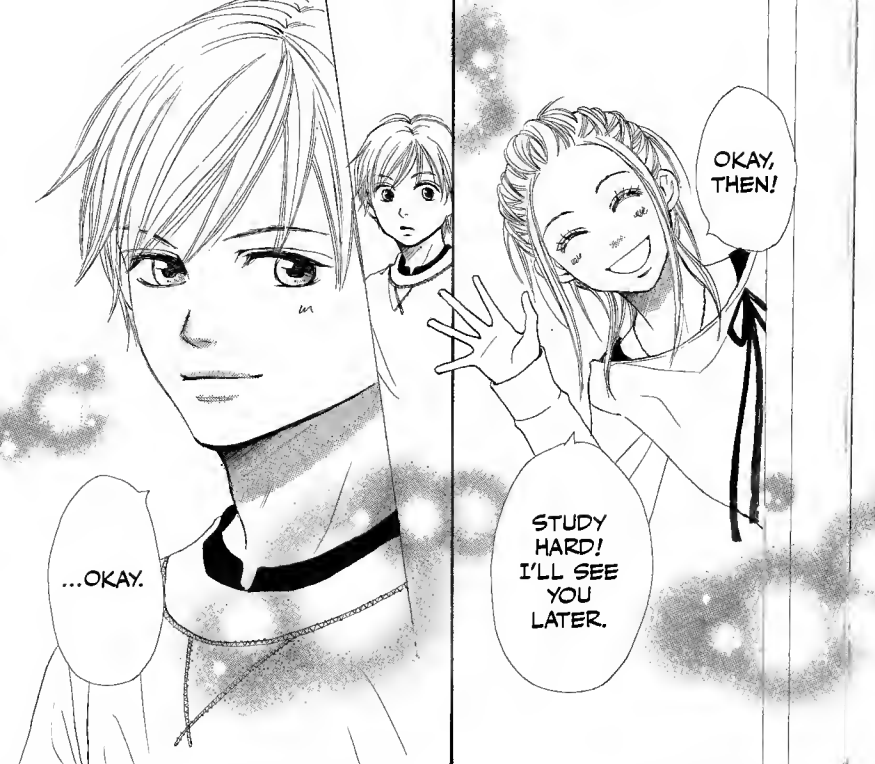
NO
I'M
NOT!
I'M
CRAZY,
AREN'T
I?!

SSSSH
SSSSH
SSSSH...
OKAAAY,
LET'S
CALM
DOWN...

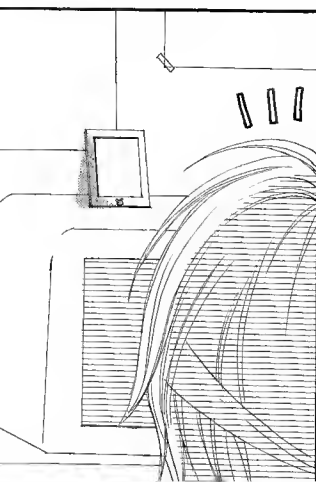
I'M
OKAY...

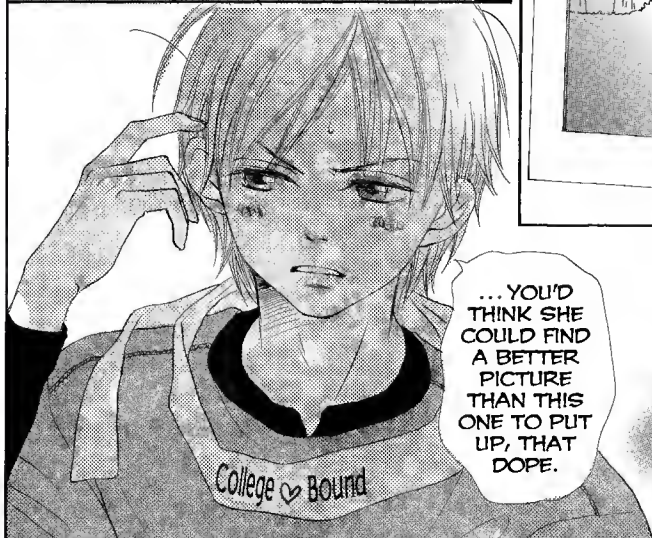




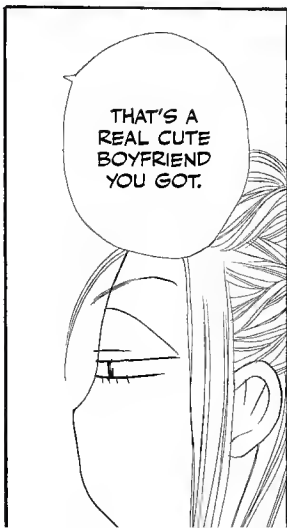


College ♡ Bound





... YOU'D
THINK SHE
COULD FIND
A BETTER
PICTURE
THAN THIS
ONE TO PUT
UP, THAT
DOPE.



THAT'S A
REAL CUTE
BOYFRIEND
YOU GOT.



WELL,
HE
NEEDS
TO
STUDY.

HUH?
YOU'RE
LEAVING
LOVERBOY
ALONE AND
HANGING
OUT WITH
ME?



KA-CHAN

I'M
COMING
IN.



WELL,
HE MIGHT
BE SHORT,
BUT HE'S
PRETTY
GREAT.
HE'S PRETTY
AMAZING,
ACTUALLY.
SO THERE!



Whoa,
the
Umibōzu
sign.



"CUTE"?
IS THAT
ANOTHER
WAY OF
SAYING
HE'S
SHORT?

YEAH. I
ALMOST
BUSTED
OUT
LAUGHING
WHEN I
SAW HIM.

THAT'S
RIGHT.



...AND
FREAKING
OUT ABOUT
MEETING MY
PARENTS
AND MAKING
THE WRONG
IMPRES-
SION...

EVEN AFTER
GETTING
THROWN
OUT OF
HIS HOUSE
THE NIGHT
BEFORE
HIS EXAM...

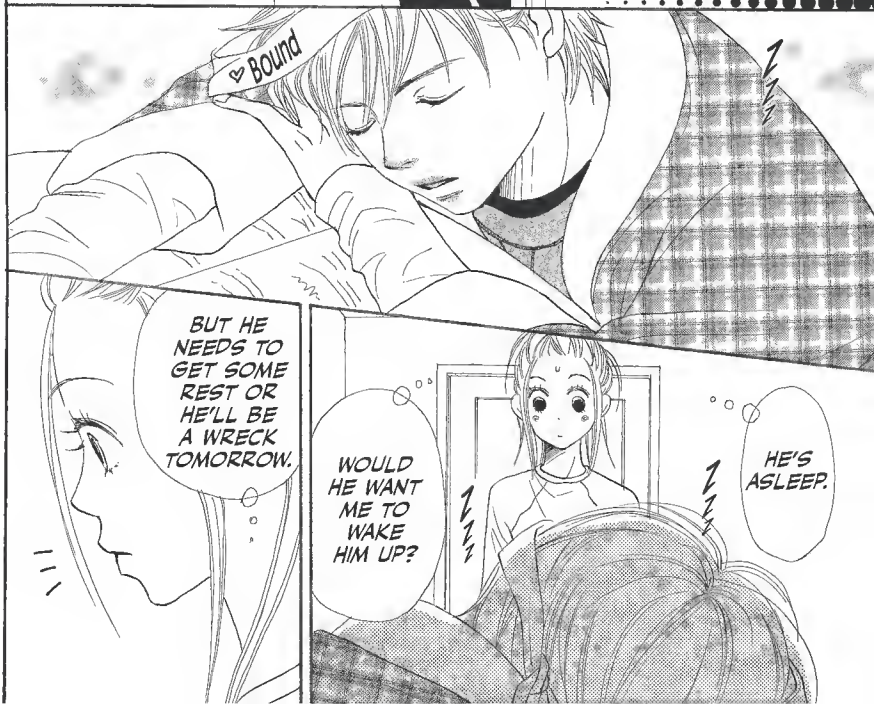
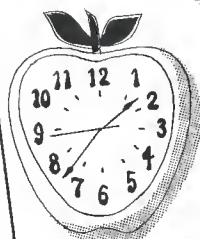


ÔTANI'S
AMAZING.
HE'LL
DO JUST
FINE.



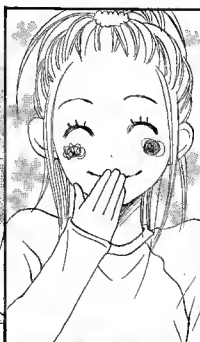
HE'S
GOING
TO BE
JUST FINE.
I DON'T
NEED TO
WORRY
ABOUT
HIM.

KA-
CHAK





College boy



"College bound" headband

"Go Ôtani go" jacket



...WOW.

HE'S SO CUTE.

GO FOR IT, ÔTANI.

I HOPE YOU DO REALLY WELL TOMORROW.

HE'S GOT PRETTY LONG EYELASHES.

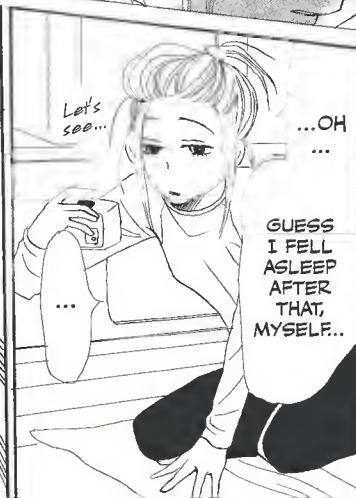
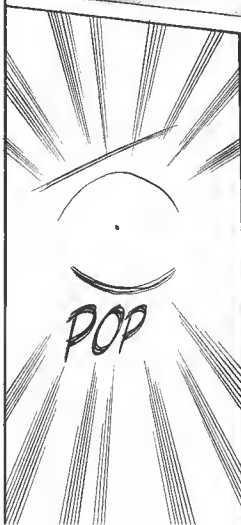
I NEVER GOT TO STARE AT HIM LIKE THIS BEFORE.

ZZZ



YOU'LL
PASS
ON YOUR
FIRST
TRY, FOR
SURE.

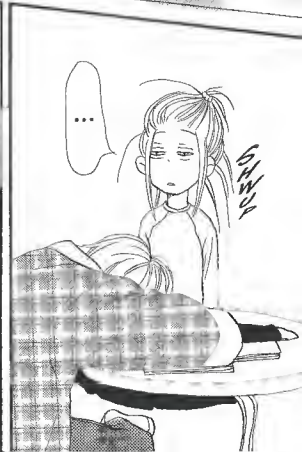
I
KNOW
YOU
CAN
DO IT,
ÔTANI.



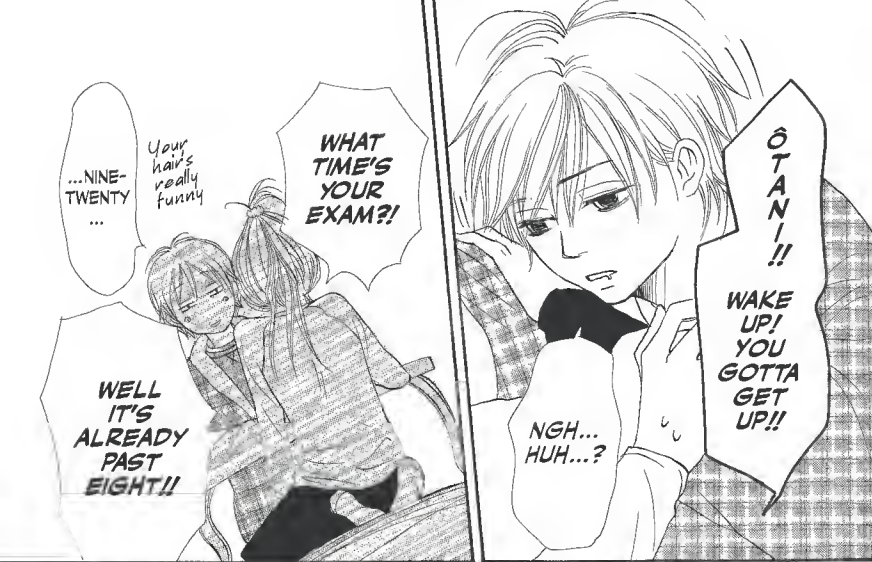
Let's
see...

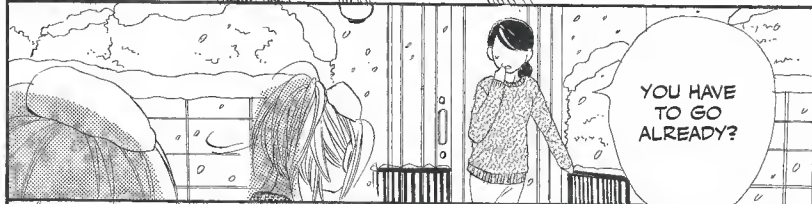
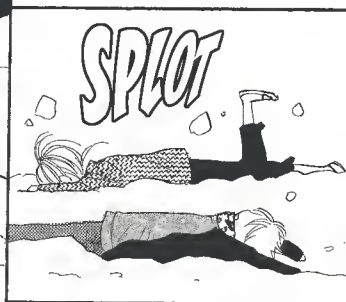
...OH
...

GUESS
I FELL
ASLEEP
AFTER
THAT,
MYSELF...



SHIN



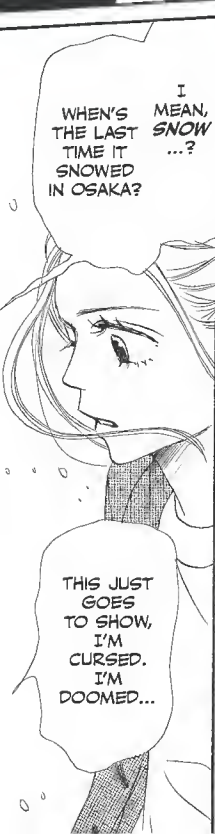




WHAT
DO YOU
WANT
TO DO,
OTANI...?



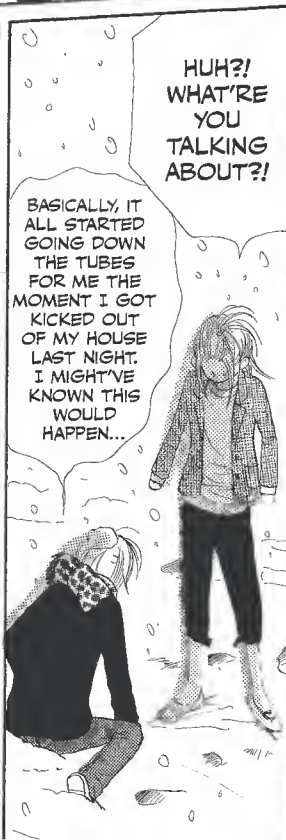
HOW
ABOUT
TELLING
US THAT
A LITTLE
EARLIER,
MOM?!



WHEN'S
THE LAST
TIME IT
SNOWED
IN OSAKA?

I
MEAN,
SNOW
...?

THIS JUST
GOES
TO SHOW,
I'M
CURSED.
I'M
DOOMED...

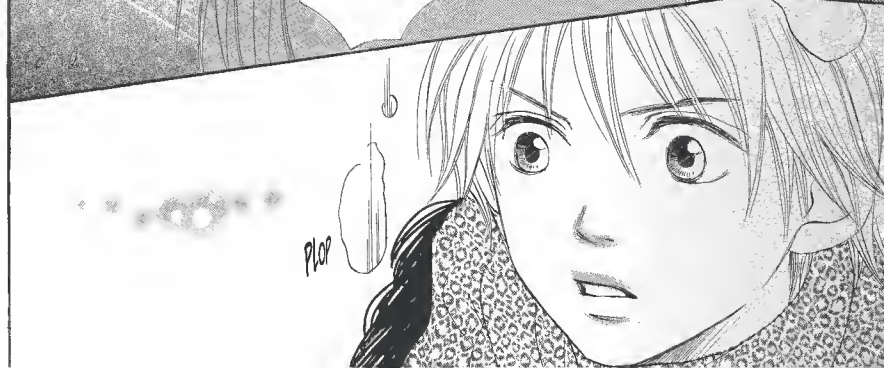


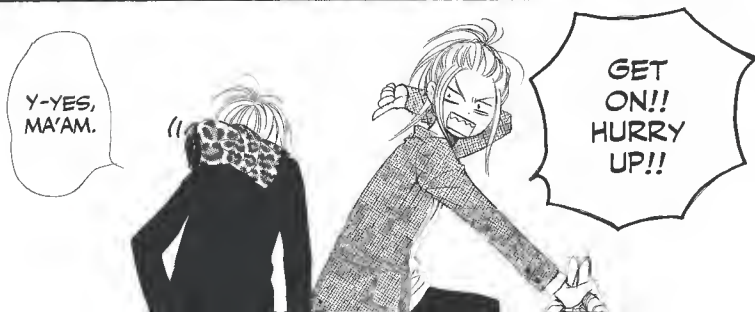
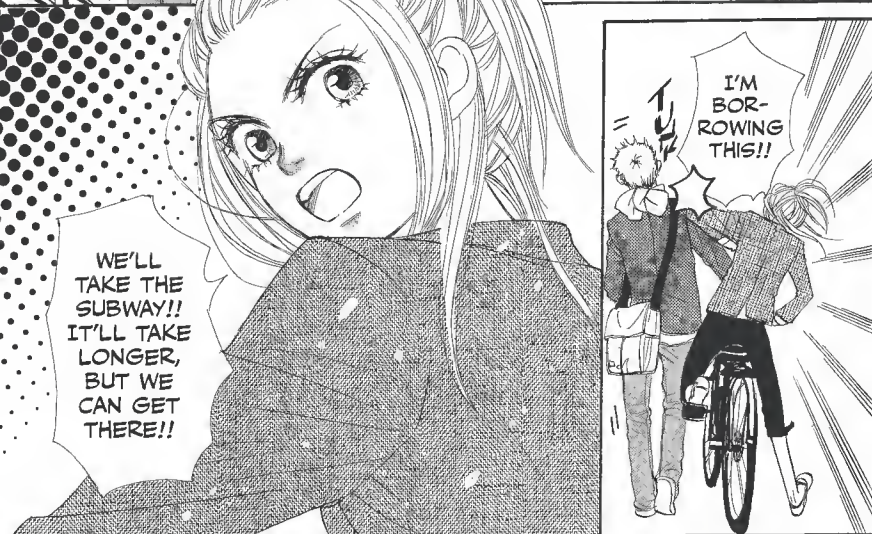
HUH?!
WHAT'RE
YOU
TALKING
ABOUT?!

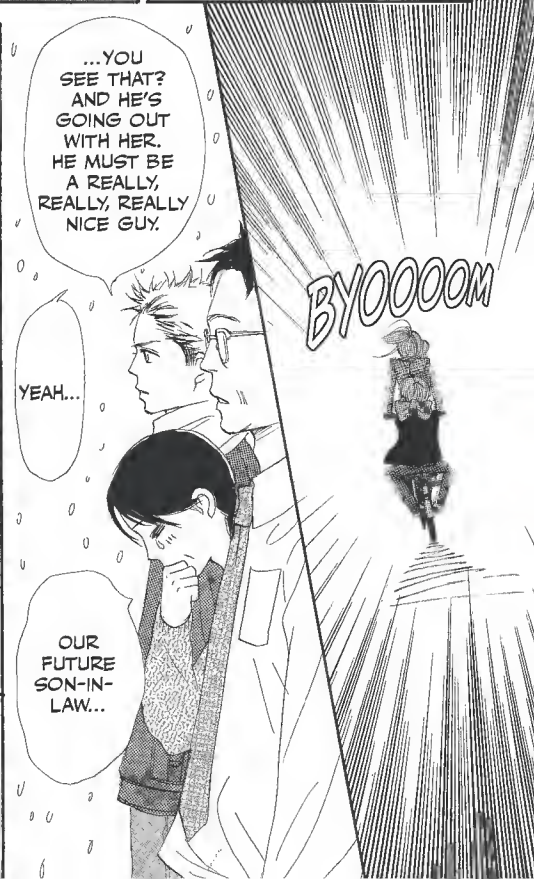
BASICALLY, IT
ALL STARTED
GOING DOWN
THE TUBES
FOR ME THE
MOMENT I GOT
KICKED OUT
OF MY HOUSE
LAST NIGHT.
I MIGHT'VE
KNOWN THIS
WOULD
HAPPEN...



OH...
FORGET
IT...









NO!
WHATEVER
YOU DO,
JUST
DON'T
GET US
KILLED!!

SORRY IN
ADVANCE
IF WE
DIE!!

SHWOOSH

WELL
GOSH!!

I'M
SERIOUS,
KOIZUMI,
YOU'RE
TOTALLY
OUT OF
CONTROL!!

YOU
STUDIED
YOUR
BUTT OFF,
ÔTANI. YOU
WORKED SO
HARD FOR
THIS. THERE
IS NO WAY
I'M LETTING
THAT ALL
BE FOR
NOTHING!!



AND DO
THE BEST
YOU CAN,
THAT'S
ALL!!

IT DOESN'T
MATTER IF
YOU PASS OR
FAIL, I JUST
WANT YOU TO
TAKE THE
DARN EXAM...



WELL, IT
WOULD
BE THE
BIGGEST
WASTE
IF HE
MISSED
THE
EXAM.

BECAUSE
HE SPENT
THE LAST
FEW
MONTHS
STUDYING
JUST FOR
THIS DAY.

KOI-
ZUMI...

**DON'T
WASTE
ALL THAT
HARD
WORK!!**

AND
BECAUSE
AFTER
THIS DAY,
THE
WHOLE
THING'S
OVER.

OKAY,
HERE
WE ARE
AT THE
SUBWAY!!
COME
ON,
LET'S
RUN!!



AND
BECAUSE
WHEN IT'S
ALL OVER,
I WANT TO
GIVE HIM A
BIG SMILE
AND SAY,
"I KNOW YOU
DID FINE."

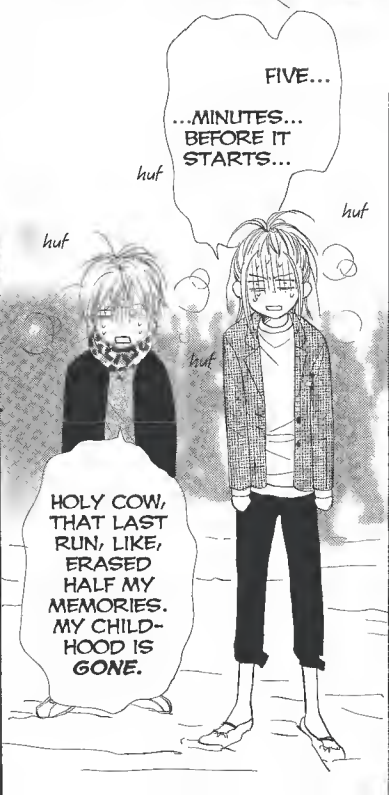


WE
MADE
IT,
OTANI!
SO
NOW
GO!

OKAY!

KRUNCH

OH.
KOIZUMI.



FIVE...

...MINUTES...
BEFORE IT
STARTS...

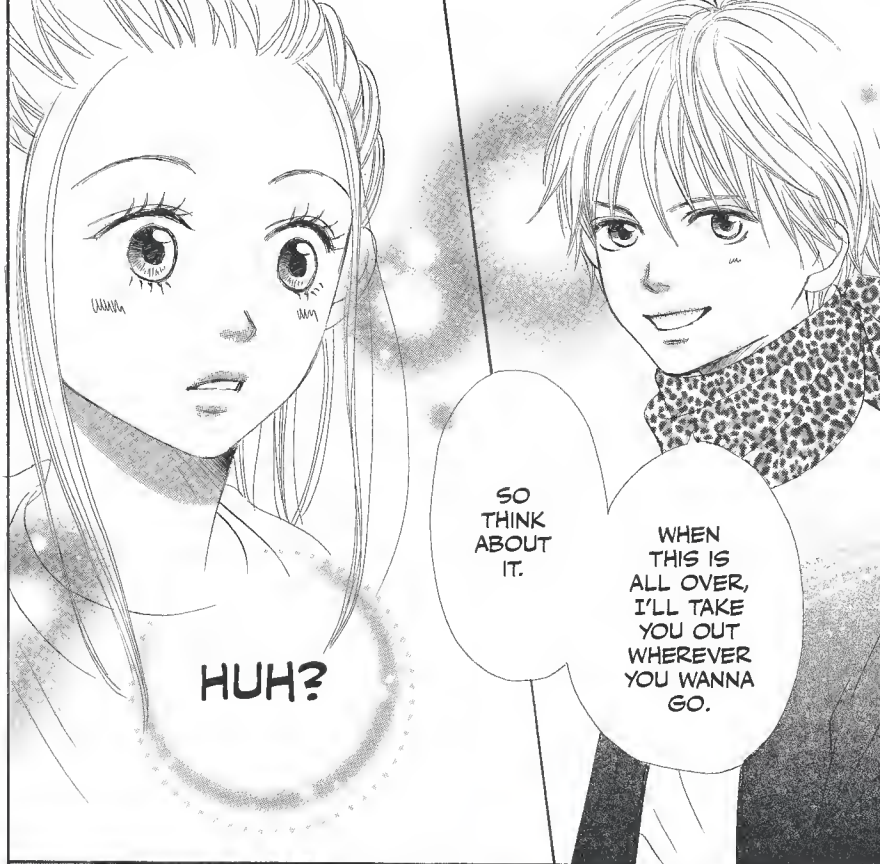
huf

huf

huf

huf

HOLY COW,
THAT LAST
RUN, LIKE,
ERASED
HALF MY
MEMORIES.
MY CHILD-
HOOD IS
GONE.



HUH?

SO
THINK
ABOUT
IT.

WHEN
THIS IS
ALL OVER,
I'LL TAKE
YOU OUT
WHEREVER
YOU WANNA
GO.



TOK

OKAY,
I'LL
SEE
YA!

OKAY!
I
WILL!

HEY!
KEEP
YOUR
VOICE
DOWN,
KOIZUMI!





hee
hee

GO
FOR IT,
ÔTANI!

YOU
MAY
BEGIN!

《...to be continued》

glossary

Page 6, panel 4: Hatsumode

The shrine visit on New Year's Day in Japan. The gang is suggesting going out on New Year's Eve, but visiting the shrine after midnight, when it is technically New Year's Day. Because many people do the same thing, trains often run all night long.

Page 11, panel 3: Chūka-man

The Japanese name for *baozi*, or Chinese buns. Pork-filled buns are called *buta-man*, curry-filled buns are called *curry-man*, etc.

Page 25, panel 5: Takoyaki

Fried octopus balls, a popular festival food.

Page 46, panel 2: Yakitori

Grilled chicken on skewers, also a popular festival food.

Page 52, panel 3: Senbei

Senbei are Japanese rice crackers that are either baked, grilled or fried. These senbei are soy sauce flavored.

Page 58, panel 5: New Year's gift money

In Japan on New Year's, it is traditional to give children money, called *otoshidama*. The money is handed out in small, decorated envelopes sometimes called *pachibukuro*, similar to the envelopes used to hand out money for Chinese New Year.

Page 95, sidebar: Yakisoba

A stir-fried noodle dish similar to chow mein. It is commonly made with pork and various vegetables such as cabbage, carrots and onions. It can also be served on a bun in a kind of sandwich called *yakisoba pan*.



All the electrical appliances in my apartment are slightly out of whack, and they only work perfectly when the repairman comes over. In other words, they have bad personalities. The TV, in particular. Sometimes when I turn it on, it makes this high-pitched whine. I'm like, if you're going to whine, whine all the time! I mean, the repairman comes over and it puts on this smooth-faced quiet act. And then, after he's gone, it sniggers at me and starts whining again. That stinker!

Aya Nakahara won the 2003 Shogakukan Manga Award for her breakthrough hit *Love★Com*, which was made into a major motion picture and a PS2 game in 2006. She debuted with *Haru to Kuki Nichiyō-bi* in 1995, and her other works include *HANADA* and *Himitsu Kichi*.

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